

Origins of the Whig Party

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

BY

E. MALCOLM CARROLL

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

PREFACE

THIS STUDY was first prepared under the direction of Professor U. B. Phillips and Professor C. H. Van Tyne and was accepted by the Graduate School of the University of Michigan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy. Additional material has since been incorporated, and it is largely new in form.

The author's tasks have been materially lightened by the work of other laborers in fields allied to his own. Professor A. C. Cole's monograph, *The Whig Party in the South*, was particularly helpful in this respect, for it made unnecessary an exhaustive study of the party's fortunes in that section. Little more than a beginning, however, has been made in tracing the history of the Whig party within the various states.

Material assistance was rendered in the course of the author's researches and in the preparation of their results. My colleagues, Professors W. T. Laprade and W. K. Boyd, have kindly read the manuscript, and many a rough passage has been smoothed as a result of their stimulating criticisms. Professor Laprade has undertaken the arduous task of seeing the manuscript through

the press. Professor A. C. Cole and Professor J. S. Bassett, on behalf of the American Historical Association, gave permission to use the maps for the presidential elections of 1836 and 1840 for the southern states in *The Whig Party in the South*. Dr. C. O. Paullin of the Carnegie Institution of Washington rendered signal aid in locating data for the preparation of the election maps. Mr. J. C. Fitzpatrick of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress was untiring in his efforts to assist the author in his search for material. Acknowledgment is due the *South Atlantic Quarterly* for permission to use the author's article, "Politics in the Administration of John Quincy Adams," which contains the substance of the first chapter of this study.

E. M. C.

Durham, N. C., May, 1925.

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ORIGINS OF THE WHIG PARTY

CHAPTER I

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PARTY

THE names of American political parties give a superficial impression of unity that rarely exists in fact. Individual differences of opinion, sectional interests, and conflicting personal ambitions combine to make complete harmony an ideal that can only be approximated by a free use of compromises and adjustments. While contemporary parties face these problems in aggravated form, few have suffered so much from divided opinions and leadership as the Whig party in the Jacksonian period. Organized in 1834, it inherited from diverse sources a perplexing variety of opinions and a divided leadership that made united action exceedingly difficult. Upon one issue alone, that of opposing Jackson and the Democratic party, could its various elements co-operate with any degree of harmony, and when in 1840 it ceased to be the opposition it promptly reverted to its former divisions. The difficulties of

the Whig party were largely due to its necessities as an opposition, which required the aid of all who were dissatisfied with the administration, but the experiences of its immediate predecessor, the National Republican party, and the personality of that party's one president, John Quincy Adams, were contributing factors that deserve more attention than they have received.

In 1825 Adams and his associates had a fair opportunity for the organization of a well-disciplined party if the necessary political leadership had been available. The patronage was in their possession, and they also had more than their proportionate share of the country's able men. Moreover, given a favorable political situation, Adams' plans of natural development had much to commend them.¹ In spite of these promising beginnings crushing defeat in the election of 1828 permanently discredited Adams as a presidential candidate and revealed the weakness of the National Republican party. The rising tide of frontier democracy in support of Jackson goes far toward an explanation of this result; however, it was in part due to Adams' political mistakes and to his half-hearted coöperation with the leaders of his party. There is little evidence that he understood, what was clear to many at the

¹ Adams' policies are given a brilliant interpretation in Henry Adams, *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (N. Y., 1920), pp. 24, 25.

time,—that a new period of intensely partisan politics was about to begin.

Party lines that had been firmly drawn between Federalists and Republicans in the early years of the republic were weakened during the generation of control by the Virginia dynasty. So hopeless was the situation of the Federalist party after the second war with England that it disappeared from national politics² and continued as a factor in only a few states.³ The disintegration of the party machine did not mean, however, the disappearance of the political ideas of which it had been the expression. Conservatism and a preference for a strong, centralized government, the distinctive features of Federalism, remained the political faith of a minority. In 1822 Jefferson assured Gallatin that the old party alignment still existed in fundamentals, with the Federalists again in support of the old and familiar cause of centralization in the government.⁴ A Democratic member of the New York Assembly wrote in 1824 that the attempt to ignore party differences

² Noah Webster stated the reason for this as early as 1807. "There is one particular in which, I think, the leading gentlemen of the Washington School have uniformly erred. They have attempted to resist the force of current opinion, instead of falling into the current with a view to direct it." Noah Webster to Rufus King, July 6, 1807. King Correspondence, quoted by D. R. Fox, *The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York* (N. Y., 1919), p. 86.

³ S. E. Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848* (Boston, 1913), I. 240-243.

⁴ Jefferson to Gallatin, Monticello, October 29, 1822. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (P. L. Ford ed., New York, 1899), X. 235, 236.

in politics was "the last and forlorn expedient of a set of politicians, who have failed in every other attempt to regain the power which they lost in 1800. The leopard has not changed his spots nor the Ethiopian his skin."⁵ Van Buren, writing in 1854 from the perspective of a long political career, declared that the principles which had been so bitterly contested as to be handed down from father to son had not entirely disappeared in the era of good feeling.⁶ These witnesses were interested in fastening the stigma of Federalism upon their opponents, and it may be assumed that the transition between the Federalist and National Republican parties was not so direct as they believed. Webster wrote in May 1824: "The events of the winter, with the common operation of time, have very much mixed up Federalists with some one or other of the parties; and though it is true that some men make great efforts to keep up old party distinctions, they find it difficult."⁷ There probably occurred a considerable change in party ties during the realignment of parties in the decade from 1820 to 1830. Some Republicans of the Jeffersonian type preferred the conservatism of Adams to the democracy of Jackson while some Fed-

⁵ *Niles' Register*, XXVI, 203.

⁶ The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren (J. C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, Washington, 1918,) II, 123, 124.

⁷ Webster to Jeremiah Mason, Washington, May 9, 1824. C. H. Van Tyne, Webster Transcripts, Library of Congress.

eralists chose the more liberal party. A majority of the old Federalists and those who thought like them were, however, a force that Adams could recruit should he decide to accept their aid.

New parties were about to make their appearance, reflecting in their characters changed conditions, but in the opening maneuvers of the campaign of 1824 the personalities of candidates and considerations of political expediency were determining factors. A striking poverty of political principles is reflected by the ease with which combinations were made between leading candidates. This is nowhere more clearly seen than in the favor which Adams gave to the proposal that Jackson be coupled with him as a candidate for the vice-presidency. When this arrangement was first suggested by Calhoun in January, 1824, Adams was distinctly skeptical; he suspected that it was the result of a clever scheme concocted by Calhoun to advance his own political interests.⁸ Two months later he had changed his mind and advised his friends that they could vote for Jackson "on correct principle—his fitness for the place, the fitness of the place for him, and the peculiar advantages of the geographical association."⁹ After repeating this endorsement on other occasions, Adams withdrew it when he

⁸ J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 241, 242. R. M. Johnson, who approached Adams for this purpose, was engaged in an effort to arrange a union of the candidates opposed to Crawford. Clay was to be made secretary of state.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VI. 253, 254.

saw that Jackson's popularity had outgrown the vice-presidency.¹⁰ His dislike of Clay and an appreciation of the strength Jackson would bring to him from the West made this combination more satisfactory than that with Clay.

The union between Adams, Clay, and Webster that was to become the nucleus of the National Republican party was delayed until the election showed that no candidate had a majority of electoral votes. The similarity of their political ideas, each finding nothing to oppose in the protective tariff and internal improvements, pointed to such an understanding, but its consummation was for a time delayed by political reasons and personal dislike. A rival candidate, Clay was first of all concerned with his own prospects of success, until the election determined that his name would not be sent to the House of Representatives. The personalities of Clay and Adams were so different that friendly relations were difficult. After a dinner at which Clay was present, Adams wrote that he "became warm, vehement, and absurd upon the tariff. . . . He is so ardent, dogmatical and overbearing that it is extremely difficult to preserve the temper of friendly society with him."¹¹

The timeliness of Clay's aid in the House and his acceptance of the chief office in Adams' cabinet gave color to the charges of a corrupt bargain.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VI. 274, 417.

¹¹ Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 258.

Historians of this period have on the whole exonerated them, and there is no available evidence that justifies dissent from this judgment. Yet it is clear from his own account that Adams allowed friends of Clay to believe that something would be done in return for Clay's aid. The first move toward the establishment of better relations between the two men came from the initiative of one of Clay's friends.

The drift of Letcher's discourse was that Clay would willingly support me if he could thereby serve himself, and the substance of his *meaning* was, that if Clay's friends could *know* that he would have a prominent share in the administration, that might induce them to vote for me, even in the face of instruction.¹²

Letcher was neither given reason to believe that this would be done nor was he specifically forbidden to hope that it would be. When John Scott, a member of the House from Missouri, came to him on behalf of Clay's interests, Adams was somewhat more yielding: "I told him that he would not expect me to enter into details with regard to the formation of an Administration, but that if I should be elected by the suffrage of the West, I should naturally look to the West for much of the support that I should need." That this was not unsatisfactory is clear since Scott "parted from me apparently satisfied."¹³ While

¹² Letcher did not claim authority from Clay in making this overture. *Ibid.*, VI. 447. Cf. F. J. Turner, *The Rise of the New West* (1906), p. 262.

¹³ Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 474.

Adams was not committed to a definite appointment, Clay's friends could henceforth be confident that something would be done for him. It is certain that Clay was not influenced to support Adams by personal preference.¹⁴ He believed that he was faced by a choice of two evils, of which Jackson seemed the more dangerous to the future of the country and perhaps to his own political future. He assured his friends that Adams would not have been his choice if he had been at "liberty to draw from the whole mass of our citizens for a President."¹⁵ The similarity between their political points of view may well have been the determining factor in the end.

The enlistment of Webster's aid, sufficiently difficult because of the coolness between him and Adams,¹⁶ was further complicated by the problem of establishing friendly relations between Adams and his own Federalist associates.¹⁷ Their co-

¹⁴ Adams' support of the policy of internal improvements at national expense formed a point of contact with Clay's western friends. The interests of the West were so intimately associated with this issue that Jackson politicians found it most embarrassing in view of their disapproval of centralized government. Eugene Roseboom, "Ohio in the Presidential Election of 1824," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, XXVI, 184.

¹⁵ Clay to Francis P. Blair, Washington, January 29, 1825. *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (Calvin Colton, ed.), pp. 111, 112; Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, February 18, 1825. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-116.

¹⁶ Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 275. Webster was reported to have questioned Adams' position on the tariff. As to the campaign, Webster was not interested in it, April, 1824: "it seemed to him that nothing was to be got with one more than with another."

¹⁷ Differences had existed between Adams and the Massachusetts Federalists since 1807 when they had divided on questions of foreign policy. S. E. Morison, *The Life and Letters of H. G. Otis*, II. 245-246.

operation would bring him valuable support in the New England states, but it was an open question if this added strength would compensate for the advantages which an association with the remnants of this discredited party would give to Adams' opponents. As in the negotiations between Adams and Clay's friends, the first steps were taken by Federalists. They had a material interest in making certain that they would not be excluded from the patronage in the event of Adams' success. Accordingly, he was sounded on various occasions as to the treatment that might be expected from him. John Reed, a member of the House from Massachusetts, reported that Federalist opposition to him was due to the fear of a general exclusion from office. In reply to this obvious plea for a share of the spoils, Adams declared that he would be under obligation to give preference to members of the other party in the event that his election should be won against Federalist opposition.¹⁸ His resentment at this attempted dictation soon cooled, for he assured Reed on the following day that Webster's fear of a "proscription from office" was unfounded.¹⁹ Webster was neutral, according to William Plumer, a representative from New Hampshire, but he suggested that Webster would be pleased if something were done for Jeremiah Mason and if the vice-presidency were given to

¹⁸ Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 312, 313.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, VI. 315, 316.

Richard Rush.²⁰ Assurances were given that party lines would not be followed in the distribution of the offices, but, as in the negotiations with Clay's friends, no definite promises were made. Efforts were renewed to commit Adams to a favorable point of view on the eve of the balloting in the House of Representatives. In February, 1825, an exchange of letters took place between Henry R. Warfield, a representative from Maryland, and Webster, which was probably arranged as a means to accomplish this object. In his first letter Warfield voiced the fears of Federalists that "should Mr. Adams be the President, he will administer the government on party considerations; that the old landmarks of party distinctions will be built up. . . ." ²¹ Webster immediately sounded Adams by showing him a draft of his reply in which he asserted that Adams "would administer the government on liberal principles, not excluding Federalists as such, from his regard and esteem," and that accordingly Webster's vote would be given to him. Confidence was expressed that Adams would, if elected, appoint a Federalist to office as proof that party allegiance would not be followed in the disposal of the patronage. Adams replied that if this confidence was founded upon an anticipated

²⁰ *Ibid.*, VI. 332.

²¹ N. R. Warfield to Webster, Washington, February 3, 1825. *The Private Correspondence of Daniel Webster* (Fletcher Webster, ed., Boston, 1857), I. 377.

appointment to a cabinet position, it was unwarranted; however, the draft received his endorsement when Webster explained that he had in mind an office of importance such as a judicial post rather than a cabinet appointment.²² Notwithstanding the unpopularity of the Federalists, it is clear that their position at this time as an independent group, unattached to either of the candidates, made them an object of solicitude and therefore of tolerance. According to Webster, writing in February, 1824, all candidates "are . . . just now, very civil towards *Federalists*. We see and hear no abuse of us except in some parts of New England."²³ Webster's aid went to Adams, and after the election he was instrumental in keeping the Federalists loyal to the administration.

In the events leading to his election Adams showed distinct skill as a politician. The coöperation of Clay and Webster formed a nucleus about which a party might be organized. Evidence was rapidly accumulating that an early renewal of partisan politics was impending and that a party in support of the weak-government

²² Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 492, 493. Webster's letter to Warfield is printed in Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 378, 379.

²³ Webster to Jeremiah Mason, February 15, 1824. Van Tyne, Webster Transcripts. This letter is inaccurately printed in *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (National Edition, Boston, 1903), XVI. 80, 81. It was apparently copied from *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Jeremiah Mason* (Cambridge, 1873), not from the MSS.

theory would be formed.²⁴ Nevertheless, Adams and Webster were agreed that an attempt should be made to form an administration without reference to party divisions. As a Federalist, fearing that emphasis upon party ties would work to the disadvantage of his friends, Webster obviously had a material interest in this point of view. "I wish to see nothing like a portioning, parcelling out or distributing offices of trust among men called by different denominations. Such a proceeding would be to acknowledge and to regard the existence of distinction; whereas my wish is, that distinctions be disregarded."²⁵ Adams was attracted by the ideal of an administration that would be without partisan bias. This aim clearly was behind his ambitious plans for national development which he thought should have the support of all. A few days before the election in the House Adams confided to his diary that "his great object would be to break up the remnant of old party distinctions, and to bring the whole people together as much as possible."²⁶ From the first Clay did not definitely disapprove a partisan organization, and the appearance of the charge of a corrupt bargain made intolerable for him association with its authors in support of the administration.

²⁴ S. R. Gammon, *The Presidential Campaign of 1832* (Baltimore, 1922), pp. 21, 22.

²⁵ Webster to Warfield, House of Representatives, February 5, 1825. Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 378.

²⁶ Adams, *Memoirs*, VI. 474; cf. *Ibid.*, 493.

The most serious obstacles to the building of an effective party proved to be Adams' own personality and standards. In curious contrast with his skillful maneuvers during the election, as president he showed no liking for nor adaptability to the requirements of party leadership. He did not understand that the president must not only be the chief executive of the nation but that he must also be the leader of his party in order to assure success to his policies. His conceptions of the duties of his office and the rigor of his puritan conscience prevented a diversion of his energy from his legitimate functions to the activities of a politician and the subordination of public interests to his political career or to party success. Cold, reserved, critical of his associates and men whom he casually met, he had few of the qualities of political leadership. When Thurlow Weed applied to him in June, 1825, for an appointment in the interest of the party's welfare, the President, due to "political impracticability" as Weed wrote, would do nothing. Weed's judgment is important as that of an experienced politician. "Mr. Adams, during his administration, failed to cherish, strengthen, or even recognize the party to which he owed his election; nor as far as I am informed, with the great power he possessed did he make a single influential friend." Joseph Gales, editor of the *National Intelligencer*, assured Weed that if Clay had been president his

wishes in regard to the appointment would have been satisfied.²⁷ More of an opportunist in politics, Clay was convinced that the usual weapons of party warfare should be freely employed. Webster soon abandoned hope of a prolonged period of good feeling and was thereafter in accord with Clay's point of view.

With the appearance of a vigorous and popular opposition, disciplined by its encounter with the administration over the Panama mission, Clay and Webster were confirmed in their judgment that organization was necessary and that newspaper support must be cultivated. Clay paid little attention to the moral significance of the use of money for this purpose and to the possible squeamishness of editors, and the lack of funds were the only limits which he recognized in his policy of subsidizing friendly newspapers. Clay wrote to Webster in August, 1827:

C. Hammond's paper at Cincinnati is . . . I think upon the whole, the most efficient and discreet gazette that espouses our cause. He is poor, disinterested and proud. . . . I think he is every way worthy of encouragement and patronage. The only assistance he would receive would be in the extension of the subscription list. Perhaps he might receive a present of a new lot of types.²⁸

In a later letter there is reference to an agreement made in the preceding year that, as a general

²⁷ *The Autobiography of Thurlow Weed* (Harriet A. Weed, ed., Boston, 1884), pp. 178-182.

²⁸ Clay to Webster, Washington, August 19, 1827. Webster MSS. Library of Congress.

policy, financial support was to be given to deserving newspapers and that a proportionate amount of free circulation should by this means be devoted to party purposes.²⁹ No evidence is available as to the methods to be used in raising a fund for this purpose or as to the amount actually collected and expended in this way. Leaders of the party, however, were expected to aid in similar enterprises, for Webster indirectly solicited a contribution from Adams to be used in a state campaign. John Bailey, a member of the House from Massachusetts, who admitted that the suggestion had originated with Webster, asked Adams if he had a sum of "from five to ten thousand dollars, that I was disposed to give without inquiring how it would be disposed, but which would be employed to secure the election of Governor Metcalf in Kentucky next August." Unlike Clay and Webster, Adams had scruples as to the morality of a scheme of this kind, and he sternly refused to have anything to do with it, "in a manner altogether explicit." His reflections on this occasion reveal the fundamental difference between his point of view in public life and that of his political associates. The use of money in elections, he believed, was wrong in principle. Should he violate that principle "there was no rule

²⁹ Clay to Webster, Washington, October 25, 1827. *Ibid.* An appeal, he thought, should be made to the large cities where capital was to be found. Cf. Clay to Webster, Washington, October 8, 1827. Webster secured a contribution which was to go to J. H. Pleasants, editor of the *Richmond Whig*. *Ibid.*

either of expediency or morality, which would enable me to limit the amount of expenditure I ought to incur. I could certainly appropriate half a million dollars to the same object without transcending any law, and with as much propriety as I could devote five thousand to the election of a governor of Kentucky.”³⁰

An equally sharp difference of opinion developed between Adams and his lieutenants in regard to the disposal of the patronage. The record of the civil service in his administration is on the whole in striking contrast with the spoils system inaugurated by Jackson,³¹ yet political expediency encroached more and more upon the merit system as his political needs became more evident. The retention of John McLean as postmaster general, an office he had filled under Monroe, in the face of Clay’s repeated charges of disloyalty³² and in spite of his refusal to use the patronage of his office for the purpose of strengthening the National Republican party³³ requires more than

³⁰ Adams, *Memoirs*, VII. 468, 469.

³¹ C. R. Fish, *The Civil Service and the Patronage* (New York, 1905), p. 72.

³² *Ibid.*, VII. 343, 349, 355, 364. Adams seems in the end to have been convinced that McLean was secretly disloyal; nevertheless, he was retained in office until the end of the term. Cf. C. R. Fish, *The Civil Service and the Patronage* (N. Y., 1905), p. 72. Professor Fish explains McLean’s retention as due to the reluctance of Adams to take up the question of finding a successor.

³³ His point of view in regard to the patronage was stated in a letter to an obscure correspondent. “It is my decided opinion, that the officers of the general government, and especially those that reside at this place, and have no votes, ought to take no step aside from their official duties to influence the election of

passing attention, as it is usually taken as the clearest example of Adams' loyalty to the merit system. Not even Clay questioned the efficiency of McLean's management of the postal service, but contemporary charges that he used the patronage of his office in the interest of Calhoun and Jackson have been generally endorsed by historians.³⁴ This decision, although it is almost unanimous, cannot be accepted without reservation. In specific terms and on many occasions he denied in his private letters any disloyalty in the making of appointments. Moreover, sound political reasons argued against his dismissal and were probably not without weight in influencing Adams to retain him. The efficiency of the postal service under his direction had made many friends for him who might have been lost to the administration by his dismissal. He was warned that the hand of his enemies had been withheld because it was feared that otherwise public opinion, especially in Ohio, would be

the President, either for or against any individual." He thought that the faithful discharge of public duties was the best support which they could give any administration. McLean to Robert Sweeney, Washington, August 15, 1828. McLean MSS., Library of Congress.

³⁴ F. J. Turner, *Rise of the New West*, p. 272. Cf. Mary Hinsdale, *History of the President's Cabinet* (Ann Arbor, 1911), p. 83. Professor Channing is not so positive in this opinion after examining the McLean papers. Edward Channing, *A History of the United States* (New York, 1921), V. 372, 373. Dr. W. C. Ford finds in Jackson's offer to reappoint McLean as postmaster general sufficient proof that he had been useful during the campaign of 1828. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Third Series, 1907) I. 359-393.

adversely affected.³⁵ The attitude of the administration was expressed by the comment of the *National Intelligencer* when the Democratic *Richmond Enquirer* questioned the true character of McLean's politics; it refused to discuss his conduct in office, as he was "a valuable public officer, and has our unfeigned personal respect."³⁶

There was in fact common ground between Adams and McLean as to the principles that ought to govern the disposal of the patronage. Both stood in theory squarely upon the merit system. McLean's point of view found expression in the course of an interesting correspondence with Edward Everett from August 1 to October 7, 1828.³⁷ It began when McLean charged Everett with responsibility for a criticism of his distribution of the patronage,³⁸ and in the letters that followed Everett clearly aligned himself in favor of a strictly partisan distribution of offices. He argued that only in this way could a party be effectively organized.

What then binds the mass of the parties together, I say the mass, not the high minded, few patriotic individuals—

³⁵ S. J. Richardson to McLean, Frankfort, Kentucky, October 4, 1828. McLean MSS.

³⁶ *National Intelligencer*, September 9, 1828.

³⁷ These letters, with an introduction and explanatory notes by Dr. W. C. Ford, are printed from the MSS. in the Library of Congress in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Third Series, 1907), I. 359-393.

³⁸ It was charged specifically that Isaac Hill of New Hampshire had used his contract for the transportation of the mails in that state as a means of distributing his newspaper, *The New Hampshire Patriot*, without expense. *Ibid.*, pp. 362, 363.

but the mass? Indubitably the hope of office, and its honors and instruments. The consequence is, that the moment any administration is formed, every man out of office, and desirous of getting in, is arrayed against it. If the administration then discard the principle of bestowing the patronage on their political friends, they turn against themselves, not only the expectants, but the incumbents. . . . For an administration then to bestow its patronage, without distinction of party, is to court its own destruction. I think, therefore, that fidelity to itself requires, that every administration should have the benefit of the cordial coöperation of all its members—the rule ought to be that, other things being equal, the friends of the administration should have the preference. Our present chief magistrate made the experiment of the higher principle; of exclusive regard to merit: what has been his reward? A most furious opposition rallied on the charge of corrupt distribution of office, and the open or silent hostility of three-fourths of the office-holders in the Union.³⁹

McLean acknowledged his friendship with Calhoun but insisted that his appointments had been in no way influenced by it. The friendship would end, he wrote, the moment he should believe Calhoun capable of attempting to influence his policies.⁴⁰ He stood squarely upon the merit system, and he was able to convince Everett, as the letters continued, that friends of the administration should at least have equal qualifications with

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁴⁰ McLean to Everett, Washington, August 5, 1828. McLean MSS. Great care was taken in writing this letter. A draft is preserved among the McLean MSS. in which many changes and interlineations are shown.

those of other aspirants.⁴¹ With this concession a correspondence that may well have become tiresome came to an end.

Clay and Webster, though their position apparently was never so clearly stated as that of Everett, were in substantial agreement. In any event, Adams' attitude in regard to the patronage found little favor with them. Neither went so far as to anticipate Jackson's spoils system by urging a general removal of office holders, but the extent of Jackson's activities in this respect suggests that few of his friends held office under his predecessor. Clay was definitely in favor of making appointments for party purposes. He wrote in 1827: "Henceforward I think that the principle ought to be adhered to is of [sic.] appointing only friends to the Administration in public offices. Such I believe is the general conviction in the cabinet."⁴² On several occasions Webster attempted to persuade Adams to use practical methods in the building of a party organization. Not only was he asked to contribute money for use in elections, but in 1827 Webster urged the importance of inducing Robert Walsh, editor of the *Philadelphia National Gazette*, to abandon his neutral attitude in favor of active support. This might be accomplished by the appointment to

⁴¹ *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Third Series, 1907), I. 389.

⁴² Clay (?) to Webster, April 14, 1827. Webster MSS. The signature to this letter has been cut out, but the text is in Clay's handwriting.

office of a friend who felt himself "neglected and injured."⁴³ Apparently nothing was done, for in the following year, according to Adams, Walsh was but a lukewarm friend of the administration.⁴⁴

During his correspondence with McLean, Everett attributed to the President a scrupulous regard for the merit rule. Nevertheless, to other contemporaries influenced either by disappointed hopes or by political prejudices, it seemed that Adams' use of the patronage was not above suspicion or at least that he allowed men under him to favor friends of the administration. Gales, of the *National Intelligencer*, assured Weed in 1825 that Clay had already appointed many. McLean was told by Isaac Hill, the powerful Democratic leader in New Hampshire, that employees of the post-office had been threatened with dismissal if they did not work for Adams. Hill also asserted that in his state "every Jacksonian, who could be reached has been removed by our state executive and legislature, and every place not already filled by federalists has been supplied from the ranks of that party or the traitors that have joined

⁴³ Webster to J. Q. Adams, Philadelphia, March 27, 1827. *Webster Letters* (C. H. Van Tyne, ed., N. Y., 1920), pp. 123, 124. Webster was confident that the appointment of Hopkinson, the friend in question and a leader among the forty or fifty thousand survivors of the Federalist party in Pennsylvania, "would heal much of the wound, which is felt in New Jersey, and would suffice even in New England to waken the activity of many friends."

⁴⁴ Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 491, 492.

it.”⁴⁵ In a letter to Everett, McLean wrote that with the single exception of Joel R. Poinsett as minister to Mexico all appointments of important offices of a political character had been made, from friends of the administration.⁴⁶ However favorable the judgment of history has been in regard to Adams’ policy in this respect, it gave little satisfaction to his contemporaries. Federalists and their friends felt themselves neglected. Republicans who had supported Adams believed that Federalists had been given undue consideration. Silas Wright of New York, a Crawford man who had followed his New England predilections in supporting Adams, doubtless was only one of many whose enthusiasm cooled. A super-annuated Federalist, Rufus King, had been appointed minister to England, he complained, and to the survivors of the same party had gone the federal offices in New York state. Webster, one of the leaders of the Hartford Convention, according to Wright, was in 1827 the recognized leader of the administration in Congress. “All say party is done away, but come to selections for office Federalists are never forgotten, and we should suppose that in the doing away of party, the old line of Democrats was done away by annihilation.”⁴⁷ As the campaign of 1828 approached Adams, in

⁴⁵ Isaac Hill to McLean, Concord, N. H., November 27, 1828. McLean MSS.

⁴⁶ *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Third Series, 1907), I. p. 378.

⁴⁷ Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, December 20, 1827. A. C. Flagg MSS. New York Public Library.

fact, was more and more compelled to compromise with his principles in the making of appointments in order, as he phrased it, to maintain harmonious relations with his associates. In spite of his reluctance and acting in such a way as to impair the political effect of his concessions, men were appointed to office against his better judgment. This was notably true in the nomination of Walsh's friend Hopkinson as district judge of Pennsylvania.⁴⁸ The extent to which Adams was forced to yield to political necessity is seen most clearly in his remarks in regard to the appointment of General Peter B. Porter as secretary of war and of W. H. Harrison as minister to Colombia.

Porter is devoted to Mr. Clay, and has taken the lead in the New York Legislature of the friends of the Administration. . . . Harrison wants the mission to Colombia more than it wants him, or than it is wanted by the public interest. . . . These men will all discharge the duties of their offices faithfully to the best of their ability. Nothing would induce me to compromise on that point; but in all short of that the right must in this, as in numberless other cases, yield to the expedient. The only possibility left me is to terminate the administration in harmony with itself, and for the sake of that I acquiesce in these measures, against the whole tenor of my judgment.⁴⁹

Making use of effective political methods reluctantly and too late in the campaign to be of much use, unwilling to coöperate unreservedly in the

⁴⁸ C. R. Fish, *Civil Service and the Patronage*, p. 72. Professor Fish's reference to Adams, *Memoirs*, VII. 207 is incorrect.

⁴⁹ Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 4, 5.

activities of party leaders, Adams could only count with certainty upon those regions which were predisposed in favor of the political purposes he represented. The centers of National Republican strength were, for the most part, in the long established communities of the eastern and the middle states.⁵⁰ For a time the South was in sympathy with nationalist policies, but diverging interests had persuaded her leaders by 1828 that a mistake had been made. Except for the die-hard survivors of Federalism⁵¹ and the chance allies provided by the fortunes of local politics and dissension within the Democratic party, National Republicanism found little support in the South outside of Kentucky and Louisiana where local interests argued effectively in favor of the protective tariff. No consistent effort was therefore made by the leaders to rally strength in that section. The situation was somewhat more favorable in the West. Earlier there had been a common interest between the West and the South in opposition to a strong central government, but as the frontier was pushed further west the problem of internal improvements was brought into prominence. Far from their markets, westerners were interested in securing aid from the national government for the construction of roads and

⁵⁰ A. C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South* (Washington, 1913), p. 1.

⁵¹ U. B. Phillips, "The Federalists in South Carolina," *American Historical Review*, XIV. 776-790.

canals. Here was a fertile field for the expounding of the American System. By stressing internal improvements in the West, protection in New England, and the relations of both with the commercial interests, an alliance between these sections might be sealed. This was the substance of Clay's advice to Webster in 1827:

The West and Pennsylvania should be made sensible of that support [of internal improvements] . . . You have some difficulty to sustain it in New England, but I hope that notwithstanding your limited territory and its improved condition you will be able to sustain it by prudence and discretion. You have your equivalents in other forms, if not that of internal improvements. We must keep the two interests of domestic manufactures and internal improvements allied, and both lead to the support of that other great and no less important interest of navigation.⁵²

This frank appeal to material interests, while very effective on numerous occasions in American politics, failed to win the new democracy then stirring on the frontier. It was Adams' failure to understand this element, and above all his dislike of it, that constituted his chief weakness. The frontier was to a large degree emotional rather than rational, and Jackson possessed the invaluable advantage of appealing to its imagination. He was a product of the western frontier, and it

⁵² Clay to Webster, April 14, 1827. Webster MSS. Clay apparently was active in promoting the meeting of the friends of protection at Harrisburg in this year. Clay to B. W. Crowinshield, Washington, March, 1827. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, II. 490, 491.

saw in his candidacy a means of trying its hand in national politics, while considerable minorities in the East, workingmen in the cities and small farmers, interpreted his career as a promise that social position, wealth, or training would not continue to be necessary qualifications for political leadership. Political ability, of a very practical variety, to make the most of this enthusiasm was not lacking among Jackson's friends. Office holders were denounced as aristocratic, and evidence of the alleged luxurious tastes of Adams was distributed broadcast to the ignorant. Conclusive proof of decadence from sound American standards was seen in the billiard table charge, and Adams was denounced as an Englishman at heart who was ready to hand over his country to the English armies.⁵³ In this crisis the friends of the administration had little to hope for in the President's leadership. He had lacked from the beginning the sanction of popular approval which is given by a clear majority of the popular vote, and by temperament he was unable to adapt himself to the changes that were taking place in public opinion. Defeat became inevitable when the campaign, as a result of decisions for which he was probably not responsible, centered upon Jackson's personality and capacity at a time when a great majority of voters did not consider that

⁵³ Francis Johnson to James Barbour, Bowling Green, Ky., August 31, 1827. James Barbour MSS. New York Public Library.

these questions were involved. That mythical person, the average man, was held to be capable of filling the most difficult of offices. Mistakes in political tactics reveal a complete failure among the National Republican leaders to understand the realities of the situation. Attempts were made to arouse moral disapprobation in regard to certain features of Jackson's life which were not calculated to convince an unconventional West.⁵⁴ In a series of carefully prepared articles the *National Intelligencer* stressed those phases of Jackson's career and personality that indicated a lack of capacity to accommodate himself to the constitutional restraints of the presidency and a lack of training for its duties.⁵⁵ These arguments might confirm the judgment of conservatives, they did not convert the rank and file of those whose votes were necessary for success in the election. An admirable but a politically unfortunate reluctance to follow Democratic political methods prevented Adams from making use of good material against Jackson. In the case of the six militiamen,⁵⁶ a favorite example of Jackson's arbitrary methods, he refused to allow the decision of the court martial which had

⁵⁴ *Truth's Advocate and Monthly Anti-Jackson Expositor*, published at Cincinnati, stressed this scurrilous phase of the campaign.

⁵⁵ These articles appeared under the title, "The Acts of Andrew Jackson as a Legislature," and had reference to his conduct as governor of Florida.

⁵⁶ This case was reported in a pamphlet, *The Laws and the Facts*, and given wide circulation. Richard Peters to James Barbour, Philadelphia, September 1, 1827. *Barbour MSS.*

sentenced them to be copied from the records of the War Department, alleging that it might be a violation of precedent and "would be considered as a measure of hostility against General Jackson."⁵⁷

Adams was permanently discredited as a party leader by his crushing defeat in 1828.⁵⁸ There was to be no thought of returning to him as a presidential candidate in the future, though it is by no means clear that any other of the National Republican leaders could have made a better showing against Jackson's popularity. National leadership in the party was to pass to Clay as the most effective organizer and the most popular candidate the party possessed. Whether the National Republicans could become a more effective party as the opposition than when in power remained to be demonstrated in the course of the next four years.

⁵⁷ J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, VII. 275.

⁵⁸ The *Intelligencer* was confident that the return to nationalist policies under Adams would not be changed even in the event of his defeat. "Revolutions never go backward. The policy of this government is established, and it is approved by the people; and no statesman—no, nor any soldier either can ever stop it." *National Intelligencer*, June 5, 1828.

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1832

THE shock of Jackson's overwhelming victory aroused sincere pessimism among National Republicans in regard to the future of American institutions. Profoundly disruptive influences were seen in the conduct of the crowd at Jackson's inaugural,¹ changes amounting to a revolution in the government service were anticipated,² and in conservative New England it was feared by some that the foundations of the country's civilization would be destroyed.³ W. H. Seward,

¹ James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (N. Y., 1861), III. 170. Cf. Webster to Mrs. E. Webster, Washington, March 4, 1829. Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 473. In 1830, Mrs. Richard Rush found Washington society so disagreeable under the Democratic regime that she left the city. Rush to Barbour, Washington, April 5, 1830. Barbour MSS.

² John Taliaferro to Barbour, Washington, February 2, 1829. Barbour MSS.

³ C. T. Congdon, *Reminiscences of a Journalist* (Boston, 1888), p. 25. "I had a strong belief not only that the republic would go to ruin, but that general ignorance would prevail, that no new books would be printed, that public schools would be abolished, that universal poverty would ensue, and that the whaling business, especially, would come to an end . . . I doubt if any public man was ever more thoroughly hated than General Jackson was in Massachusetts. We even named a cutaneous complaint contracted in barber shops after the much admired and much abused hero. Then there was a particularly square toed boot which we called the Jackson." The significance of these gloomy reflections is lessened in that Congdon was then a child of eight years.

writing long after the event, foresaw the loss of protection, of internal improvements, "the future disunion of the states, and ultimately the universal prevalence of slavery."⁴ In less timid minds this depression, if it existed at all, was temporary. Even in the dark days following the election Clay saw nothing that would "discourage the hope of a speedy restoration of the reign of reason and common sense."⁵ In May, 1829, Pleasants of the *Richmond Whig* was confident that the removals from office had already resulted in many desertions from the Democratic party, and he predicted the overthrow of Jackson in 1832.⁶ Though it seemed to Francis Brooke, Clay's friend and correspondent, that all but honor had been lost, he found some consolation in the belief that the victory had been won against Adams rather than against the cabinet.⁷ The party, however, had been reduced to a disorganized minority⁸ with a dependable source of power only in New England and with a precarious influence in scattered areas elsewhere.⁹ To

⁴ W. H. Seward, *Autobiography* (N. Y., 1877), p. 74.

⁵ Clay to Barbour, Ashland, Ky., November 21, 1829. Barbour MSS.

⁶ J. H. Pleasants to Barbour, Richmond, May 30, 1829. *Ibid.*

⁷ Brooke to Barbour, Richmond, January 27, 1829. *Ibid.*

⁸ Immediately after the election, Adams and J. W. Taylor, a member of the House from New York, agreed that "the two recent parties are virtually dissolved—and that of the administration irretrievably." Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 89.

⁹ Adams was given all the electoral votes from New England except one in Maine, but, except for sixteen in New York, he carried only New Jersey and Delaware of the middle states. Maryland, a border state, gave him six votes.

rebuild and increase its strength it would be necessary to solve the problems of organization, leadership, and campaign issues in such a way as to unite all elements in opposition to Jackson and, in addition, to make gains at his expense.

Factional differences barred the way to the solution of these problems. Although many were conscious of common ground in support of a nationalist conception of government, minor issues, such as anti-masonry, and the obscure ramifications of personal ambition made the organization of a more effective National Republican party difficult without the cement of patronage and power. That sense of loyalty or allegiance to party which is a result of definite organization was not highly developed;¹⁰ individual rather than party standards controlled the decisions of many. A beginning towards an organization was made, however, in the winter of 1830-1831 as a result of the formation of a congressional caucus.¹¹ Adams was told in March that members of the opposition, probably of the House, had held weekly meetings during the

¹⁰ C. F. Mercer to Barbour, Washington, September 20, 1830. Barbour MSS.

¹¹ Materials for the study of the party from the point of view of its national organization are meager. The files of the *National Intelligencer* do not throw much light upon the subject. Adams' *Memoirs* give occasional hints, since he was in the confidence of some of the National Republican leaders in Congress, particularly in that of J. W. Taylor. His lack of interest in the details of party management, except in so far as they offered food for reflection upon the weaknesses of human nature, probably kept him from writing all that he knew.

session at the lodgings of J. W. Taylor. There is a hint that Webster and Edward Everett were named as a committee on publicity. Little was done in the nature of propaganda, although Taylor pointed out an article in the *Intelligencer* which he thought was the work of Webster.¹² Early in the following session Adams reported a conference of seventeen members of the House, all friends of protection, for the purpose of determining the line of action to be followed. Its purpose was not primarily to advance the interests of the National Republican party, but its membership was largely drawn from that source.¹³ At a later session, attended by such apostles of protection as Clay, John Davis of Massachusetts, and Hezekiah Niles of the *Register*, Adams was convinced that Clay was interested in the revision of the tariff as a means of advancing his presidential ambitions.¹⁴ The functions of this caucus broadened until they included the determination of the opposition's plan of campaign. A member was appointed from each state to confer with his associates, and in Janu-

¹² Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 337.

¹³ *Ibid.*, VIII. 439. Adams attended these party conclaves as a result of his interest in the tariff question and of his position as chairman of the House committee on manufactures. He was not however one of the party leaders. "I had never been consulted, and never wished to be consulted, upon the movements of the party since the 3d of March, 1829." *Ibid.*, VIII. 401.

¹⁴ As chairman of the committee which had the function of preparing a plan of action Clay reported a bill that would reduce rates to the extent of more than seven millions in one year. *Ibid.*, VIII. 446-447.

ary, 1832, these delegates met to arrange the "opposition's course of policy" after canvassing the policies of the administration.¹⁵ The continuation of these meetings and the development from them of a national organization was made impossible by irreconcilable differences and by a reluctance to incur the unpopularity of a congressional caucus.¹⁶ Difficulties in harmonizing the various elements that would have to be included in a rejuvenated party and the lack of coördination between national and state leaders¹⁷ were in part responsible for the absence of a permanent national organization. It is possible, however, that many were attracted to a party in which considerable differences existed who might have been repelled by one that had more exacting standards of discipline.

More successful efforts were made within certain states in the construction of party machinery. In New York the Democratic party under the Regency provided a highly efficient model which some of the National Republican leaders wished to follow. Oran Follett, a Buffalo politician of some importance, wrote early in 1832 in support

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII. 456.

¹⁶ "Mr. Clay's objection to the continuance of the meetings was, that it would have the appearance of a permanent association to dictate measures to Congress. There was a proposition for holding weekly meetings; but it did not prevail." *Ibid.*, VIII. 448.

¹⁷ The loose connection between party leaders in Washington and in the various states is illustrated by the *Intelligencer's* confession that it did not know the party allegiance of candidates in distant states. *National Intelligencer*, August 27, 1830.

of his recommendations that a newspaper be established to serve the interests of the National Republicans as the *Albany Argus* had served those of the Regency: "It is a wrong policy founded in a false estimate of things, that makes us too wise, in any of the relations of life to learn wisdom of our enemies." He was confident that there were one hundred men in the city of New York who would each give one hundred dollars for this purpose, and that the faithful in the smaller cities of the state could be depended upon to increase the total to more than three thousand.¹⁸ That anything was done in this direction does not appear from the evidence, but further measures were taken for the creation of an effective party. The National Republicans in New York City organized in December, 1830, and appointed a committee of seventy.¹⁹ In June of the following year a state convention met in Albany, named a state correspondence committee of seven members, and recommended that committees be appointed in each county that had not already created one.²⁰ An active correspondence was

¹⁸ Oran Follett to Joseph Hoxie, February 6, 1832. "Follett Papers" (L. Belle Hamlin, ed.), I. *Quarterly Publications of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*, V. 53, 54.

¹⁹ S. R. Gammon, *The Presidential Campaign of 1832*, p. 60.

²⁰ The county correspondence committees were instructed to call meetings and to inform the state committees as to local developments. Not only was the state committee to correspond with the county committee, but it was directed to maintain a lively exchange of letters with the committees of other states. *Niles' Register*, XL. 279. Similar action was authorized at a meeting of

carried on, and an office was opened at Number Three Broad Street where an attendant was to be at all hours of the day to consult with any who came.²¹ This system was apparently found desirable, for a resolution was adopted by the National Republican Convention at Baltimore in December, 1831, recommending that organizations similar to that in New York be established in states where they did not already exist.²² While the party was developing a capacity for organization within the states, no action was taken for the creation of a permanent national committee, but central leadership of a sort was doubtless furnished by Clay and other party leaders. The *National Intelligencer* by reason of its wide circulation and standing with leaders of the party was, in some measure, a binding influence. Nevertheless the absence of letters from national leaders in the Follett Papers suggests

National Republicans in New York city as a means of preparing for the National Republican Young Men's Convention, which had been called to meet in Washington. *National Intelligencer*, February 29, 1832.

²¹ Hiram Ketchum to the State Corresponding Committee in Buffalo, New York, August 10, 1832. Follett Papers, V. 66, 67; National Republican State Corresponding Committee in Buffalo, September 14, 1832. *Ibid.*, 69, 70. The state committee recommended that an office be opened in Buffalo, and for this purpose the party there was authorized to draw upon National Republicans in New York City for a small amount. John Youngs advised the Buffalo committee that in order to bring home to the people the seriousness of the situation it would be necessary to call primary assemblies. John Youngs to the National Republican State Corresponding Committee in Buffalo, Burdette, September 19, 1832. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²² *National Intelligencer*, December 16, 1831.

that the party in each state was left largely to its own devices.

For a time after the catastrophe of 1832 leaders of the opposition and the *Intelligencer* followed a passive policy in regard to the nomination of a presidential candidate. Clay wrote to Webster that, in his opinion, a colorless attitude should for the time being be maintained in regard to the administration. An immediate declaration of hostilities would preserve unity among Jackson's friends; the events of the winter of 1828-1829, the formation of a new cabinet, and the inaugural address would make clear "the whole ground of future operations." It was of great importance, Clay believed, that the question of a nomination for the campaign of 1832 should not be prematurely agitated.²³ Similar views were expressed by Webster in 1830. He thought that nothing should be done in regard to a nomination, that the party should for the present follow a policy of obstruction.²⁴ The administration would defeat itself, he wrote to Clay, if it were given an opportunity; he immediately added however that by no means should "we . . . let them disturb the tariff, or injure any other existing interest."²⁵

²³ Clay to Webster, Washington, November 30, 1828. Webster MSS.

²⁴ Webster to J. H. Pleasants, Washington, March 6, 1830. Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 492.

²⁵ Webster to Clay, Washington, April 18, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 260.

The result of the election of 1828 was scarcely known before the *Intelligencer* was urging the importance of delaying the discussion of a nomination for a period of at least two years.²⁶ In August, 1829, its position was expressed in a clipping from the *Western Times*. The appearance of conflicting candidacies was to be regretted, because it would revive dissension within the party in regions where it had subsided. Rivalry between party leaders at this stage of the campaign would compromise the prospects of success. "We hope, therefore, that the day of trouble will be removed as far as possible, and not be brought prematurely upon us, by those who 'delight to rule the tempest' and those who love 'unceasing warfare'." ²⁷

It was clearly for the sake of expediency alone that agitation for Clay's nomination was delayed. His support of Adams, his American System, and his efforts to organize the party when it was in power marked him as the logical candidate. Although the *Intelligencer* gave him no open support during the first months of Jackson's administration, it was evident that he was being groomed for the race. Whatever he did was carefully noted, and his occasional speeches were reported in full. When the *Cincinnati Gazette* suggested that the candidate should be accepted

²⁶ *National Intelligencer*, November 21, 1828.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, August 10, 1829.

whose chances for success were most promising, the *Intelligencer* hastened to explain in August, 1829, that this indicated no intention of setting Clay aside. "With the prominent place Mr. Clay has so long maintained in the public view, and with his increasing popularity, he could not keep himself out of view if he would. The country will probably demand his services, and he dare not refuse if he would."²⁸ The paper's appearance of neutrality was entirely abandoned in the summer of 1830, when it openly came out for Clay. The enthusiasm which his name aroused at fourth of July banquets and his nominations by local meetings in various states were carefully noted.²⁹ According to the *New York American* the enthusiasm of a meeting of his friends in that city was evidence of the affectionate regard of the people for Clay. "It was not merely the calm, cold assent of the judgment in his favor . . . but the overflowing of strong personal predilections on the part of thousands who had never seen the man."³⁰ Clay was in fact popular with great numbers of the people, and the advantages of his

²⁸ *Ibid.*, August 26, 1829. The campaign for Clay's nomination had not been initiated by his friends because of "a proper deference to public opinion, which they mean to follow, and not to attempt to lead."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, August 6, 21, October 2, 1830.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, December 17, 1830, quoting *New York American*, December 14, 1830. W. L. Stone, editor of the *New York Commercial Advertiser* wrote to Webster that Clay's name in itself would add strength to the party. Stone to Webster, New York, December 14, 1830. Webster MSS.

candidacy in this respect were in such striking contrast with Adams' leadership that its effectiveness in winning votes was exaggerated. The *Intelligencer*, for example, refused to consider the possibility that the nomination might better be given even to a new man if that would improve the party's prospects.

The reluctance of the *Intelligencer* to endorse the call for a national convention was, therefore, consistent with its previous stand. There was no real object to be served, and it was doubtless feared that a convention would bring out differences within the party. "Convention or no Convention, Henry Clay stands in full view of the people as the National Republican candidate for the presidency."³¹ But by August, 1831, the demand for a convention was so general and the alternative, a nomination by a congressional caucus, so objectionable, that the *Intelligencer* took the ground that a convention would be the most effective way of securing harmonious support for the party's candidates. The nomination of a suitable candidate for the vice-presidency would be its most immediate task.³² In fact the convention, when it named Clay, ratified a nomination that had already been made by a carefully fostered public opinion.

³¹ *National Intelligencer*, December 28, 1830.

³² *Ibid.*, August 23, 1831.

The skilful maneuvers of Clay and his friends made his position as the leader of the party so secure that the National Republicans found it impossible to consider seriously the merits of another leader whose chances might have been better in the difficult task of defeating Jackson. In Calhoun's opinion John McLean of Ohio had no chance of success, but the movement in his behalf at least contained such a possibility and therefore merits notice. He had made friends in both parties by his efficient administration of the postal service under Monroe and Adams. A member of the Supreme Court at this time, having been appointed by Jackson after his refusal to continue as postmaster general, his legal and judicial experience and above all his attitude in regard to the use of the patronage had removed him from the field of partisan politics and had made him a favorite with the dissatisfied elements of both parties. His potential strength as a leading politician of Ohio, an argument which later had more weight, was urged in his favor.³³ The election of 1828 was scarcely over when suggestions were made to McLean that he might enter the next campaign as a presidential candidate. At the time he was not clear as to his attitude towards Jackson; he hoped in any case that the question of nominations would not be agitated

³³ J. S. Barbour to James Barbour, Catalpa, (Virginia?), July 30, 1831. Barbour MSS.

prematurely.³⁴ B. W. Richards,³⁵ probably the closest of his political advisers, at first discouraged an open break with the administration in order that McLean might be in a position to succeed Jackson, in the event of Jackson's refusal to run for a second term.³⁶ According to Buchanan, Pennsylvania would prefer him to any other candidate, should Jackson withdraw; therefore it was desirable that McLean should not be maneuvered into a position of hostility to the President.³⁷ Elisha Whittlesey, an important National Republican leader in Ohio and a member of the House, wrote that if he had not withdrawn from political life by accepting a place on the Supreme Court the moderates of all parties would have rallied to his name.³⁸ McLean and his friends remained in touch with the situation in the Democratic party; Richards gave assurances in June, 1830, to some of its leaders that McLean would be kept in the center of public attention ready to take advantage of "any contingency preventing the re-

³⁴ McLean to W. L. Pratt, Washington, December 31, 1828. McLean MSS.

³⁵ Richards had been appointed by Jackson as a government director of the United States Bank; he later resigned after his election as mayor of Philadelphia.

³⁶ Richards reported an increasing confidence in Pennsylvania that Jackson would decline a renomination on the grounds of ill health. Richards to McLean, Harrisburg, February 4, 1830. McLean MSS. Should Jackson be out of the race he was confident that McLean would find increasing support among the people. Richards to McLean, Philadelphia, May 15, 1830. *Ibid.*

³⁷ James Buchanan to McLean, Lancaster, June 9, 1830. *Ibid.*

³⁸ Elisha Whittlesey to McLean, Washington, May 23, 1830. *Ibid.*

election of Genl. [Jackson].”³⁹ In the fall of that year, when it became clear that Jackson would again be a candidate, Richards at first urged McLean to try for the vice-presidency on the Democratic ticket,⁴⁰ and similar advice came from Democratic quarters.⁴¹ Later when McLean decided against this, Richards approved. “The semblance of an intimate connection at this time,” he wrote, “with any of the high contending parties cannot be desirable and must be of doubtful influence with the public.”⁴²

McLean was regarded by his friends as well qualified to act as a fusion candidate. An Ohio correspondent of some apparent influence informed him that all parties there looked to him as a means of healing the divisions of partisan politics.

I have spoken of the very unpleasant situation of the 2 great political parties in Ohio, continually involved in Violence and Contention, with which we are all tired and disgusted, and wished to know whether we could not unite on some man, and come together again, and men-

³⁹ Richards to McLean, Philadelphia, June 17, 1830. *Ibid.* McLean had been formally nominated for the presidency in the columns of *Poulson's Daily Advertiser*. Richard Rush believed that the friends that McLean numbered among the Anti-Masons were chiefly those who had formerly been Democrats. Rush to Barbour, Washington, August 7, 1830. Barbour MSS.

⁴⁰ Richards to McLean, November 1, [1830?]; November 2, 1830; January 31, 1831. McLean MSS.

⁴¹ Two Democrats suggested the advisability of a nomination for the vice-presidency; there was a popular movement, they reported, to name a strong candidate for that office in view of Jackson's uncertain health. John A. Avery and James Ruside (?) to McLean, Washington, October 7, 1831. *Ibid.*

⁴² Richards to McLean, Philadelphia, March 2, 1831. *Ibid.*

tioned your name as the most likely to have that effect in Ohio, with which almost all seemed to agree, and many seemed pleased with the idea that there was still hope that we might come together again for you may rest assured we are tired of political contentions and it is very injurious to Ohio. I do hope that not only Ohio but the South and some parts of the East may yet unite in this object.

Many members of the legislature had endorsed these views, and newspapers without reference to their party bias were ready to support McLean.⁴³ A few weeks later a Pennsylvania politician wrote that the nomination of McLean by both parties was still a possibility.⁴⁴

The state election in Kentucky, August, 1831, was admittedly a crisis in Clay's candidacy,⁴⁵ for a defeat in his home state would forecast a similar result in the national elections. Clay's friends won a majority of eleven in a total of one hundred and twenty-one members,⁴⁶ but the margin was so small that it aroused doubts as to Clay's success. Andrew Stewart, long a member of the House from Pennsylvania, wrote that Clay must be given up in view of this result; even had he been more successful in Kentucky, he could not win the discontented elements in the Democratic party. All parties, according to Stewart, seemed

⁴³ Samuel H. Hale to McLean, Columbus, February 6, 1830. *Ibid.* Had it not been for Calhoun's unpopularity, he might have been used for this purpose if McLean refused to be a candidate.

⁴⁴ J. Ruside (?) to McLean, Columbus, February 26, 1830. *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *National Intelligencer*, September 17, 1831, quoting *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 13.

⁴⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLI. 1.

to agree that McLean was perhaps the only man who could unite all elements of the opposition and thus "arrest the course of administration which not only endangers the Union but threatens the subversion of everything valuable in the Republic—the judiciary, tariff, internal improvements, the bank and in short everything."⁴⁷ It was suggested to McLean in September, 1831, that if Clay's name should be withdrawn, joint meetings of former Clay and Jackson men in his interest might be called in Pennsylvania.⁴⁸ McLean and his friends exaggerated the chances he would have in a contest with Jackson, for the bitter temper characteristic of politics in the campaign of 1832 made improbable the success of a candidate of so little color. Nevertheless, had he been nominated by the National Republicans, it is probable that he would have been endorsed by a part, at least, of the Bank and tariff Democrats; and the support of the Anti-Masons, which he had a fair chance of winning, would have completed the union of the most important elements of the opposition. In neglecting to weigh the political prospects of other leaders than Clay, and especially in ignoring McLean, the National Republican Convention refused to follow the only

⁴⁷ Andrew Stewart to McLean, Union Tower, Pa., August 13, 1831. McLean MSS.

⁴⁸ To McLean, Philadelphia, September 14, 1831. *Ibid.* The signature of this letter has been cut out. Former Jackson men, like Stewart, ought to be chairmen of these meetings according to the writer.

policy that had any prospect of success. This was pointed out by one of McLean's correspondents.

If the great December convention assemble to select a particular individual, instead of designating him who might most successfully compete with Van Buren's President (or Kendall's), it will long be regretted by the Nation. I hope and pray that the person may be supported whom all circumstances considered will offer the best prospect of success, for so certain as General Jackson succeeds another four years so certain Van Buren follows 12 long years.⁴⁹

At an early period of the campaign, there was discussion as to a possible combination between McLean and Calhoun with the latter as the presidential candidate. In December, 1829, this arrangement was suggested to McLean by a Virginian.⁵⁰ A rumor to this effect was reported from Ohio by Thomas L. Hamer, a Democratic member of the House from that state,⁵¹ and Webster, writing to John H. Pleasants, referred to this proposal as a negotiation that was in progress.⁵² It was asserted by the *Washington Globe*, the administration paper, that Duff Green of the *United States Telegraph* was back of the

⁴⁹ W. Bradley to McLean, Washington, October 6, 1831. *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ J. F. Caldwell to McLean, Lewisburg, Va., December 30, 1829. *Ibid.* A similar proposal was made to S. L. Gouverneur, Postmaster of New York, in an anonymous undated letter from Keene, New Hampshire. Gouverneur MSS., New York Public Library.

⁵¹ Hamer to McLean, Columbus, February 16, 1830. McLean MSS.

⁵² Webster to Pleasants, Washington, March 6, 1830. Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 492.

scheme.⁵³ It never assumed more definite shape than that of similarly nebulous proposals which are not uncommon in the first phases of a campaign, yet it is of interest as a tentative step in a revived understanding between the South and the West. The scheme found little favor even with the men in whose interests it had been started, in spite of the personal friendship that existed between them.⁵⁴ A correspondent told McLean that he had been frequently questioned as to the prospects of a coalition with Calhoun; in each case he had replied that if this arrangement were made McLean would lose all claim to the support of his friends.⁵⁵ Whittlesey had no desire to injure the friendship between McLean and Calhoun, but no political union must be considered. "There is not on earth a man who would set in motion more efficient measures to prostrate you, if you crossed his path, than Mr. Calhoun."⁵⁶ Calhoun was probably just as reluctant to make an arrangement with McLean. At a later time,

⁵³ *National Intelligencer*, April 1830, quoting *Washington Globe*, April 1, 1831.

⁵⁴ McLean had preferred Calhoun to Clay in the campaign of 1824. McLean to George B. Torrence, February 12, 1823. "Torrence Papers," *Quarterly Publications of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*, 1907, II. 7. Among the McLean MSS. in the Library of Congress are a number of friendly letters from Calhoun.

⁵⁵ W. Bradley to McLean, Washington, May 7, 1830. McLean MSS.

⁵⁶ Whittlesey to McLean, Washington, May 27, 1830. *Ibid.* Whittlesey was obviously interested in preventing an open break between McLean and Clay.

when the approaching Anti-Masonic convention was arousing ambitions among opposition leaders, he pointed out the dangers of McLean's nomination. Among other things, the Judge could not make a successful campaign in the South because he was not widely known. Moreover his endorsement of the distribution of the surplus revenue, a measure that was more odious in the South than the American System as it was a sugar-coated bribe to secure consent for protection, made it impossible for McLean to increase his popularity there.⁵⁷ There was at no time a reasonable prospect of an agreement between Calhoun and McLean, but the existence of a possibility of this kind constituted a danger to Clay's undisputed leadership and probably contributed to the premature agitation for his nomination.

Discussion of a union with Calhoun, like that of McLean's presidential ambitions, had no definite results, and in the end McLean apparently had little or no influence in the election. The influence of Elisha Whittlesey aided in the preservation of at least a neutral attitude towards Clay. In view of the existing political crisis, he wrote in June, 1830, that the question of first importance was the success of principles, not of men. He was convinced that McLean and Clay

⁵⁷ Calhoun to Christopher Van Deventer, Fort Hill, May 25, 1831. "Correspondence of John C. Calhoun" (Jameson, J. F., ed. *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1899), II. 293.

were essentially in accord upon national policies, that accordingly it would be a catastrophe if both were to run, "for," he concluded, "in that event neither of you could be elected."⁵⁸ In order to remove a possible obstacle to a truce between them he assured McLean that Clay had not tried to ruin his political career during Adams' administration.⁵⁹ As late as June, 1832, with a view, it seems, to the campaign of 1836, Whittlesey asked McLean not to array himself so decidedly "against Mr. Clay, as to preclude his friends generally hereafter, from uniting in your support."⁶⁰

The problems of consolidating the opposition and of recruiting new strength were largely concerned with a possible conciliation of the Anti-Masonic party, composed as it was of deserters from each of the two parties.⁶¹ There was at

⁵⁸ Whittlesey to McLean, Canfield, Ohio, June 9, 1830. McLean MSS.

⁵⁹ Whittlesey to McLean, Canfield, August 30, 1830. *Ibid.* "I think your information that Mr. Clay and his friends wished to crush you during the late administration has been somewhat exaggerated. I am aware, there was some jealousy respecting your course on the part of Mr. Clay's friends. I was in the habit of having free conversation with Mr. Clay and I recollect of his having spoken of you in terms of respect, and so far as the conversation turned on your political course, much delicacy was observed by him." It is quite clear from the evidence in the first chapter of this study that Clay in fact did attempt to discredit McLean with Adams.

⁶⁰ Whittlesey to McLean, Washington, June 20, 1832. *Ibid.*

⁶¹ The Anti-Masonic party had its origin in Western New York a region settled largely by people from New England who were friendly to Adams and the National Republicans. Charles McCarthy, "The Anti-Masonic Party" (*Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1902), I. 383. It was not long however in attracting support from the ranks of the Democratic party.

least a possibility that the two important divisions of the opposition might agree upon a single candidate for the presidency. Welcome as Anti-Masonic support would be, those National Republicans who knew the party most intimately were far from enthusiastic over the prospect of making common cause with it. Coöperation with "this demon of Anti-Masonry" was most distasteful to party leaders in New York, where earlier experiences had resulted unsatisfactorily.⁶² Many hated the "Anti-Masonic excitement," but as in the case of Hezekiah Niles their dislike was not so strong as their will to defeat Jackson. "The great cause is, with me, like Aaron's rod. It swallows up all other considerations."⁶³ As it was improbable that the National Republicans would abandon Clay, the prospects for coöperation in the national election depended upon the Anti-Masonic convention. Unwilling to commit

⁶² W. B. Lawrence to Clay, New York, November 8, 1830. Clay MSS. Library of Congress. Lawrence sketched in broad outlines the problem which existed wherever National Republicans and Anti-Masons were in contact: "We have nailed your colours to the mast. But what are we to do with this demon of Anti-Masonry, which seems destined to blast the fairest prospects of putting down a proscribing and corrupt administration. With a union of all opposed to General Jackson our entire triumph in this state, the electors being chosen by general ticket would be certain; separated from the Anti-Masons we must be in a minority . . . It has been suggested that by aiding the Anti-Masons to win this State from Jackson, even in favor of a third person, the success of our candidate in the House of Representatives would be secured." But Lawrence believed that another attempt to coöperate with the Anti-Masons would alienate valuable members of their own party.

⁶³ Hezekiah Niles to Clay, September 17, 1830. *Ibid.*

himself to the principles of that party, by the summer of 1831 Clay had abandoned hope of its nomination.⁶⁴ Consideration was first given to Richard Rush and J. Q. Adams, but McLean was clearly the favorite among the delegates when they assembled in Baltimore. His friends had warned McLean that too close an association with the Anti-Masons would injure his chances of drawing support from any portion of the Democratic party,⁶⁵ and when he finally sent a statement to Anti-Masonic leaders which satisfied that party⁶⁶ he conditioned his acceptance of a possible nomination upon the absence of another opposition candidate in the campaign.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, when his final refusal was received, so reluctantly was his name abandoned that he was given a plurality of three votes on the first ballot taken in the caucus that preceded the convention.⁶⁸ Albert H. Tracy, a leader among the Anti-Masons of New York, wrote in October, 1832, that he had

⁶⁴ S. R. Gammon, *Presidential Campaign of 1832*, p. 43. Cf. Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, June 23, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 304; Clay to Adam Beatty, Ashland, June 25, 1831. *Ibid.*, p. 305; Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, October 4, 1831. *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 317.

⁶⁵ Richards to McLean, Harrisburg, February 4, 1830. McLean MSS. Buchanan to McLean, June 9, 1830. *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ McLean to Francis Wyatt, Secretary of the Anti-Masonic Society of Cincinnati, May 24, 1831. *Ibid.* Without specifically endorsing Anti-Masonic principles, he made clear his disapproval of "all associations designed to influence the public will" which did not have the interests of the public exclusively in mind.

⁶⁷ S. R. Gammon, *Presidential Campaign of 1832*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ *National Intelligencer*, October 19, 1831, quoting the *Rhode Island Republican*. The editor of the *Republican* had acted as the secretary of the caucus.

always been convinced that Clay would have been "driven from the field" if McLean had accepted nomination of his party.⁶⁹ As a result of Clay's hostility⁷⁰ and of McLean's withdrawal⁷¹ the convention turned as a last resort to William Wirt. Convinced that an independent Anti-Masonic campaign would have little weight in the elections, Wirt was ready in the interests of harmony to resign in favor of McLean or any other candidate other than Clay whom the National Republicans might nominate.⁷² It was the latter party's attachment to its chosen leader, and the natural suspicions of a conservative for a radical party, that prevented a pooling of their strength in the common cause. In April, 1832, Wirt was certain that the leading politicians of the opposition, both of the National Republican and Anti-Masonic

⁶⁹ Tracy perhaps had in mind the campaign of 1836 when he assured McLean that no animosity was felt by Anti-Masons because of his refusal of their nomination. "Mr. Clay will certainly be used up in the present contest so that I trust his most hallucinated partisans will not dream of his ever again competing for the presidency." Tracy to McLean, New York, October 19, 1832. McLean MSS.

⁷⁰ It was not until the Anti-Masonic nomination had been made that Clay for the first time unequivocally repudiated principles of that party. To a committee of Indiana Anti-Masons, Ashland, October 8, 1831. *Niles' Register*, XLI. 260, 261. Adams told Joseph E. Sprague that Clay's friends had "kicked and buffeted the Anti-Masonic party till it was impossible they should support Mr. Clay." Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 400.

⁷¹ *Niles' Register*, XLI, 259, 260.

⁷² Wirt decided not to withdraw at so early a stage in the campaign, believing that those Anti-Masons who had formerly been Democrats would return to their first allegiance rather than to support Clay. Wirt to Carr, Baltimore, January 12, 1830. J. P. Kennedy, *Memoirs of the Life of William Wirt* (Philadelphia, 1860), II. 317.

parties, had lost all hope of success,⁷³ but in the event of the election going into the House he was ready to use his influence even in favor of Clay.⁷⁴

More successful efforts for an understanding between the two parties were made within the states, where the influence of Clay's dislike of Anti-Masonry was not so immediately felt. In New York united support was given to a single list of electors,⁷⁵ while in Pennsylvania the National Republicans abandoned their electoral ticket for that of the Anti-Masons in fear that otherwise the state would return a majority for Jackson.⁷⁶ The example set by Pennsylvania was followed in Ohio. The National Republican candidate for governor withdrew his name, and the party threw its strength to the Anti-Masonic candidate and to the electoral ticket of the party.⁷⁷ In these states the Democratic party was in power; to make headway against it coöperation was necessary, an argument which was more effective in state than in national politics. Agreement proved impossible where National Republicans were in control of the state administrations; such was the situation in Vermont, Massachu-

⁷³ S. R. Gammon, *Presidential Campaign of 1832*, p. 142.

⁷⁴ Wirt to Carr, Baltimore, October 25, 1832. Kennedy, *William Wirt*, II. 329.

⁷⁵ McCarthy, *Anti-Masonic Party*, pp. 415, 416. It was understood that if this ticket won a majority its votes would be given either to Clay or to Wirt as circumstances might require in order to defeat Jackson.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 528-530.

setts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey.⁷⁸ Clay attributed the hostile feeling of Anti-Masons in these states to a belief that the party in power, whether National Republican or Democratic, would have to be changed in order to eliminate Masonic influences.⁷⁹

If a basis of common action could be found the forcing of Calhoun out of the Democratic party by Van Buren offered the possibility of making new allies for the National Republicans.⁸⁰ Webster, however, was convinced that no help could be expected from the South except in Louisiana, where the desire of the sugar planters for protection gave rise to interests similar to those of the manufacturing states.⁸¹ Nor was Clay more optimistic as to the possibilities in that section. Calhoun seemed to him to have so little influence outside of South Carolina as to make it unprofitable to seek his aid.⁸² From Calhoun's point of view the prospect of coöperation with Clay and his party was most distasteful,⁸³ as an alliance with men whose political ideas he thoroughly disapproved. Nevertheless, a moderation appeared

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 510, 518, 551, 555.

⁷⁹ Clay to John Bailhache, Ashland, November 24, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 289.

⁸⁰ Gammon, *Presidential Campaign of 1832*, pp. 76-95.

⁸¹ Webster to Clay, Washington, May 29, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 289.

⁸² Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, April 1, 1832. *Ibid.*, 332-333.

⁸³ Calhoun to James H. Hammond, Fort Hill, May 16, 1831. Calhoun, *Correspondence*, p. 291.

in the opinion of both which suggests a desire of each to gain the ear of the other. Clay was willing to restrict the funds for internal improvements in part to an occasional and problematical surplus but chiefly to the proceeds from the sale of public lands.⁸⁴ On this important question, Calhoun conceded the use of the public lands, provided that his constitutional scruples be satisfied by an amendment expressly authorizing internal improvements by national aid.⁸⁵ In regard to the vital question of the tariff, Clay believed that it should be reduced to the needs of an economical administration, with the reservation that the principle of protection should not be abandoned.⁸⁶ In the spring of 1832 an attempt was made to arrange a basis of coöperation between the friends of Clay and Calhoun in the southern states. Clay was informed that Duff Green, after a conference with Calhoun, had proposed that their friends should unite in support of Calhoun in Virginia. It was thought that if Calhoun should carry three or four states the election would be forced into the House where his influence could be used in favor of Clay. Moreover, the prospect of a measure of success in

⁸⁴ Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, October 4, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 315.

⁸⁵ Calhoun to Christopher Van Deventer, Fort Hill, August 5, 1831. Calhoun, *Correspondence*, p. 297.

⁸⁶ Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, October 4, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 314, 315. Clay was of the same opinion in the spring of 1832. Clay to James Barbour, Washington, March 10, 1832. Barbour MSS.

the South would, it seemed to Clay, encourage his friends elsewhere. Skeptical of Calhoun's strength outside South Carolina and doubtful of the willingness of his friends in Virginia to join Calhoun, he chose to allow events to take their course rather than to make a definite arrangement.⁸⁷ The appearance of the Bank question as the dominant issue in the summer of 1832, an issue in regard to which Calhoun did not take his usually anti-nationalist point of view,⁸⁸ provided an additional basis of coöperation. Coalition was distinctly the expedient policy, but it was defeated by differences between the political ideas of the two men and by Calhoun's growing belief that a standard should be raised about which the South might rally in defense of its interests.⁸⁹ Calhoun would have brought Clay little strength, for his candidate, Floyd, carried South Carolina alone, while the rest of the section, with the exception of Maryland and Kentucky of the border states, went unanimously for Jackson.

The quest of the National Republicans for an effective campaign issue proved to be no more fruitful in its results than the attempt to create

⁸⁷ Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, April 1, 1832. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 332, 333.

⁸⁸ Calhoun to Van Deventer, Washington, March 21, 1830. Calhoun, *Correspondence*, p. 271.

⁸⁹ A. C. Cole, *Whig Party in the South*, p. 33.

an efficient national organization and to unite the various elements of the opposition. Protection obviously would not serve the purpose, in view of the desirability of gaining greater strength in the South. A clear-cut division did not exist upon this issue, since Jackson had not completely identified himself with those who were opposed to protection. The President had signed a number of bills appropriating money for internal improvements;⁹⁰ accordingly Adams' favorite issue was not available. The immediate effect of the Maysville Road veto indicated a popular reaction which might be useful, but the ultimate result strengthened Jackson's position. These considerations having made the important questions unavailable, Clay attempted to create an issue of his own. It seemed to him that it would be expedient to initiate a movement for a constitutional amendment to enable Congress to pass a bill over the president's veto by a simple majority in both houses; the administration by this maneuver would be placed upon "the aristocratic bench" in defending the more stringent requirement in the constitution.⁹¹ There was merit in

⁹⁰ Henry G. Wheeler, *History of Congress, Biographical and Political; comprising a History of Internal Improvements* (N. Y. 1848), II. 124-140. The annual appropriations for this purpose during the Jackson and Van Buren administrations were consistently large.

⁹¹ Clay to Webster, Ashland, June 7, 1830. Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 504. Cf. Clay to Adam Beattie, Ashland, June 8, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 277; Clay to J. S. Johnston, Lexington, June 14, 1830. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

this scheme as an incident in the give-and-take of party struggles, but it contained a minimum of promise as a campaign issue against Jackson, the unquestioned leader of the new democracy.

As a result of the failure to develop a popular issue that would unite the various divisions of the opposition, no formal platform was adopted when the National Republican convention met at Baltimore in December, 1831. The address, which was its substitute, presented the position of the party fairly enough by attacking Jackson and all his works; lacking principles in common, except in a conservative point of view which it was inexpedient to emphasize, no choice remained but a deliberately negative position. The real issue, the address stated, was Jackson's administration of the government.⁹² Friends of protection had urged the importance of a definite statement of the party's principles. This was Niles' desire in 1830:

If a nomination is made without a statement of these broad principles on which all nominations should be supported, we run the risk of offending friends at home, whose character and talent deserve our courtesy and command our respect. . . . I am in favor of meeting the whole question fairly—of grasping the entire subject at once, doing what I think is right, and leaving the result to take care of itself, on its own just principles.⁹³

Fear of alienating possible allies made undesirable a frank statement of the issues, implicit as they

⁹² *Niles' Register*, XLI. 307-312.

⁹³ Niles to Clay, October 28, 1830. Clay MSS.

were in Clay's American System. More definite in its position was the convention of National Republican Young Men which met in Washington in May, 1832, for propagandist purposes. A statement was issued which endorsed an "adequate" tariff, internal improvements, the supremacy of the Supreme Court as the final authority for the settlement for the constitutional questions, and the power of the Senate as essential to the preservation of the separation of powers.⁹⁴ It is improbable that this platform was prepared without the consent of the party leaders, and it is therefore possible that they intended by this indirect means to satisfy the demands of men like Niles who wished a clear formulation of their principles. No mention was made, it is to be noted, of the Bank issue,⁹⁵ which was to become the deciding factor in the campaign.

Professor Catterall demonstrated a generation ago that the responsibility for fastening the dead weight of the Bank issue upon the opposition belongs to Nicholas Biddle rather than to Clay or any other National Republican leader.⁹⁶ Due

⁹⁴ *Niles' Register*, XLII. 236, 237.

⁹⁵ This omission was probably intentional. Until the President took a definite stand upon the question there remained a possibility that a rechartering act might after all become a law. To bring the issue into the campaign at this time might therefore be premature.

⁹⁶ R. C. H. Catterall, *The Second Bank of the United States* (Chicago, 1903), pp. 215, 216.

to the hostility of Jackson, it was certain to become a political issue after the expiration of its charter in 1836, but it became involved in the preceding campaign when Biddle decided as a result of his own opinion and the advice given him by George McDuffie,⁹⁷ a member of the House from South Carolina, to present his memorial for a renewal of the charter early in January, 1832. Friends of the Bank believed that Jackson would sign the proposed bill in preference to making this an issue and that in the event of a veto an outraged public opinion would defeat him.⁹⁸ Until 1831 Clay had opposed an application for the renewal of the Bank's charter prior to the election. Speaking at Cincinnati in August, 1830, he favored the indefinite postponement of the question.

Whether the charter ought to be renewed or not, near six years hence, in my judgment, is a question of expediency to be decided by the then existing state of the country. It will be necessary at that time to look carefully at the condition both of the bank and of the union. To ascertain, if the public debt shall, in the meantime, be paid off, what effect will that produce? What will be our then financial condition? what that of our local banks, the state of our commerce, foreign and domestic. . . .? I am, therefore, not now prepared to say whether the charter ought or ought not to be renewed on the expiration of

⁹⁷ McDuffie, a friend of Calhoun, was at this time Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means in the House of Representatives.

⁹⁸ Richards to McLean, Washington, July 19, 1832. McLean MSS.

its present term. The question is premature. . . . It belongs to posterity . . . it ought to be indefinitely postponed.⁹⁹

Only a clear majority in both houses and the certain approval of the President, he wrote to Biddle in September, would justify an application. If a bill to recharter the Bank were vetoed the Bank would probably become the "controlling question in American politics" and Jackson's election on that issue would "amount to something like a popular ratification of the previous rejection of the renewal of the charter of the Bank."¹⁰⁰ By the fall of 1831 Clay had decided that the Bank ought to make an application before the election,¹⁰¹ a change of opinion which may have been caused in part by the discouraging result of the August election in Kentucky and by a hope that the Bank issue might strengthen him. He was not, however, in Biddle's confidence at this time; only three weeks before the application was made, he wrote to the president of the Bank: "Have you come to any decision about an application to

⁹⁹ *Niles' Register*, XXXIX. 25, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Clay to Biddle, Ashland, September 11, 1830. *The Correspondence of Nicholas Biddle, dealing with National Affairs, 1807-1844* (R. C. McGrane, ed., Boston, 1919) pp. 110-114. Clay advised that the application be made to Congress in its first session after the election. In his reply Biddle agreed that it would be better to do nothing in the short session of 1830-1831. Biddle to Clay, Philadelphia, November 3, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 287.

¹⁰¹ Clay to Brooke, Ashland, October 4, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 316.

Congress at this Session for the renewal of your charter?"¹⁰²

Although it is generally agreed that Clay was not responsible for Biddle's decision, it needs to be demonstrated that Clay was perhaps chiefly interested in the Bank issue as it affected the political situation, more particularly in its bearing upon his own ambitions, and that Biddle may have suspected the motives of Clay's interest in his institution. There is more than a suggestion of a personal interest in Clay's earlier advice against an application before the election. At Cincinnati he refused to commit himself to a renewal of the charter even in 1836. The cashier of the branch bank at Savannah forwarded a letter to Biddle that contained an inference as to Clay's motives that had probably occurred to many. "The inference is obvious. He doubts the result of the application for a new charter, and is unwilling to hazard his popularity by becoming its advocate."¹⁰³ When Clay decided

¹⁰² Clay to Biddle, Washington, December 15, 1831. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 142. Cf. Smith to Biddle, Washington, December 17, 1831. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁰³ M. W. B. to Hunter, October 30, 1830. Biddle MSS. Library of Congress. Hunter copied this letter, and with an enclosure of his own, sent it to Biddle. He explained that the writer was a prominent lawyer in Georgia, employed by the Bank in view of an impending conflict with the state banks, and that he wished to arrange satisfactory terms for a renewal of his employment. An extract from the letter to Hunter without an explanation of its presence in the Biddle MSS. is printed in McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 114. Hunter's own letter is not printed, and Professor McGrane is mistaken in identifying Hunter as cashier of the Nashville branch at this time.

to reverse his attitude, his change was perhaps due to an increased confidence in the effectiveness of the Bank as a political issue. In December, 1831, friends of the Bank noted that the opposition was chiefly concerned with the political aspects of the question. Biddle's agent in Washington, Thomas Cadwallader, reported that Webster favored an application directly a favorable majority was certain in the House; he believed that in this event neither the Senate nor the President would reject it. Webster's opinions, like those of most of Clay's friends, were, he thought, guided by party considerations.¹⁰⁴ The Bank issue would in fact be a means of coöperating with Calhoun and his friends.¹⁰⁵

It was McDuffie who convinced Biddle that application should be made before the election.¹⁰⁶ He was the Bank's chief reliance in the House; Biddle was informed that he "is our main stay."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Cadwallader to Biddle, Washington, December 25, 1831. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 155, 156. Webster and Clay were said to have regarded any possibility of a reconciliation between the administration and the bank as evidence of hostility against themselves. Catterall, *Second Bank*, pp. 216, 217.

¹⁰⁵ Roswell L. Colt to Biddle, Baltimore, January 29, 1831. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁶ Catterall, *Second Bank*, p. 220.

¹⁰⁷ Cadwallader to Biddle, Washington, December 25, 1831. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 158. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 105, note. Professor McGrane suggests that the attack upon the bank was planned by Van Buren, then secretary of state, in a conference with Virginia politicians at Richmond as a means of covering the pro-slavery agitation in the Virginia constitutional convention then in session. A letter from Clay to Biddle is quoted in evidence. "Unless I am deceived by information from one of the most intelligent citizens of Virginia, the plan was laid at Richmond

Cadwallader was in constant communication with McDuffie in the critical days of December, 1831, when the final decision was made,¹⁰⁸ and when he was uncertain as to who should sponsor the proposed bill in the Senate he turned to McDuffie for advice.¹⁰⁹ When Biddle wrote to him in February, 1832, he mentioned the qualities of "tact, the gentleness and firmness" with which Calhoun had carried the existing charter through the House in 1816: "we rely that the union of the same qualities will enable you to be equally successful

during a visit made to that place by the Secy. of State last autumn, to make the destruction of the Bank the basis of the next Presidential election. . . ." Clay to Biddle, Ashland, June 14, 1830. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 105. Van Buren in fact did go to Richmond during the sessions of the convention. *National Intelligencer*, November 10, 1829. It is improbable, however, that this debate, though it was important in other connections, could have determined the course of national politics at this time. While McDuffie, as a friend of Calhoun, was a representative of the extreme southern point of view, his part in bringing the Bank issue into politics was probably the result of a desire to find a basis of coöperation with the National Republicans and a conviction that the Bank should be retained. More shares of the Bank's stock were owned in South Carolina, it is to be noted, than in any other state than Pennsylvania. Catterall, *Second Bank*, App. IX. p. 508. At least one leader of the opposition in the South was not in favor of making the Bank the campaign issue. Willie P. Mangum of North Carolina feared that the question would "ultimately take an appearance of a trial of strength between General Jackson and the Bank. In that case the Bank will go down. For General Jackson's popularity is of a sort not to be shaken at present." Mangum to William Gaston, Washington, January 19, 1832. Mangum MSS. Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Cadwallader to Biddle, Washington, December 22, 1831. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 151, 152. McDuffie's advice was that the application should be made without reference to the President's action if a majority could be depended upon in both houses.

¹⁰⁹ Cadwallader to Biddle, Washington, December 26, 1831. *Ibid.*, 158, 159.

now.”¹¹⁰ The leadership of a Calhoun man on behalf of an issue that had the approval of Clay and Webster suggested to contemporaries that Calhoun and his friends had driven a sharp bargain with the tariff leaders. Elisha Whittlesey thought that the price of McDuffie’s services would be a tariff bill that would satisfy Calhoun.¹¹¹ There is no evidence that a formal understanding was reached between Clay and Calhoun to this effect; nevertheless, after the nullification movement had reached its crisis, the compromise tariff bill indicated the extent of Clay’s concessions.

The Bank became a political issue when its memorial was presented in Congress January 6, 1832, and the effect of Jackson’s veto was to make it the dominant issue of the campaign. Its resources were then marshalled in support of Clay,¹¹² although Biddle continued the pretense that the Bank’s activities in arousing public

¹¹⁰ Biddle to McDuffie, Philadelphia, February 10, 1832. *Ibid.*, 178, 179.

¹¹¹ Whittlesey to McLean, Washington, June 20, 1832. McLean MSS.

¹¹² The part played by the bank in the campaign is described by Jabez D. Hammond in his authoritative history of New York. “The Bank, with its array of officers and debtors, constituting a considerable portion of the entire population in every state of the union, uniting its exertions with the National Republicans and old opponents of General Jackson, while the friends of Jackson and Van Buren, and, I may say, the old democratic party, encouraged and cheered on by the state banks and their dependents, produced a war of no ordinary character for warmth and zeal.” Jabez D. Hammond, *The Political History of New York* (Buffalo, 1850), II. 419. Cf. Biddle to Clay, Philadelphia, August 1, 1832. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 196, 197.

opinion had no direct connection with Clay's candidacy. Biddle was given complete liberty by his directors to spend money in order to influence opinion,¹¹³ and from Biddle's expense account it is clear that more than forty-two thousand dollars were spent for this purpose.¹¹⁴ The *Intelligencer* diligently reported evidence that might suggest an aroused public opinion on account of the veto,¹¹⁵ and it endeavored, particularly by its clippings, to convince its readers that the veto had resulted in disastrous economic disturbances. In *Cincinnati*, it was said, not a bid had been offered at an auction sale of choice real estate, and prices offered for lots were one half what they had been six months before. "What prices, we will ask, may be expected next spring, if Jackson is reelected? That is the question; and let those who have property look to it."¹¹⁶ Further alarming information as to the trend of economic conditions appeared in a letter, which had been going the rounds of the press, reporting that one of finest houses in Marietta had been sold for one-tenth of its original cost. According to the *Cincinnati Advertiser* other forms of business had also suffered. In the preceding year citizens of that city had paid three hundred thousand dollars to country traders and farmers for hogs,

¹¹³ Gammon, *Campaign of 1832*, p. 121.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹¹⁵ *National Intelligencer*, July 19, 20, August 9, 22, 1832.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, October 4, 1832.

whereas the most diligent inquiry had not shown that "one dollar has been advanced this season" for a similar purpose.¹¹⁷ It was pointed out for the particular benefit of the workingmen that the Bank was useful to them in that it helped industry by providing a stable currency. Economic arguments, however, made little headway against the popular belief, fostered by Democratic politicians, that the Bank was a corrupt monopoly, dominated by a few wealthy men and by foreign influences.

As the campaign progressed discontent developed among the National Republican leaders and their friends in regard to the management of the party. Biddle endorsed Clay after the Bank issue had been taken up by his party, but earlier he had worked for the nomination of McLean at the Anti-Masonic convention. He advised McLean indirectly not to refuse an offer, because he was convinced that the National Republicans would unite in supporting him.¹¹⁸ So interested was Biddle that he went to Baltimore, writing to Richards from there that he should immediately be told what action McLean would take.¹¹⁹ Dissatisfaction with Clay's leadership appeared even among National Republican politi-

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, October 8, 1832.

¹¹⁸ Richards was not convinced that Biddle's suggestions were wise. "I have much reliance on his good feelings, but am not able to determine how far he may feel an active interest in the matter, or how far his political sagacity may be relied upon." Richards to McLean, Philadelphia, September 8, 1831. McLean MSS.

¹¹⁹ Biddle to Richards, Baltimore, September 25, 1831. *Ibid.*

cians. Adams did not make an effective use in his favor of what influence he still had.¹²⁰ In December, 1831, Oran Follett wrote to John G. Camp, whom he later described as a confidential friend of Clay, proposing that Clay be withdrawn for the purpose of using his name under more favorable auspices in 1836. The opportunity for Clay's success in the campaign then in progress had been lost "in coaxing Anti-Masonry in New York, and in other moonshine expedients to unite the elements of the opposition." It was Follett's opinion that Clay should refuse the National Republican nomination; all were aware that Clay's election as parties then stood was as "hopeless as salvation without repentance."¹²¹ Before the convention met, Timothy Pickering asked Clay to withdraw so that the opposition could unite in support of Wirt.¹²² As a last effort to accomplish the same purpose Edward and A. H. Everett wrote to Clay—and the letter was sent to a number of his friends—demanding a sacrifice in the

¹²⁰ J. S. Barbour to James Barbour, Washington, March 25, 1832. Barbour MSS.

¹²¹ Follett believed that if Clay would wait until 1836 he would stand without a rival as the leader of the combination made up of all parties committed to the support of a modified tariff, an issue that might restore his popularity, to a rechartering act, and to internal improvements. Follett to Major G. Camp. Buffalo, December 13, 1831. Follett Papers, I. 50, 51. After the election Follett explained to Clay that the suggestion for his withdrawal had been suppressed by Clay's friends. Follett to Clay, January 10, 1833. *Ibid.*, I. p. 75.

¹²² Pickering to Clay, Boston, October 22, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 319.

interest of unity.¹²³ But the party was under too many obligations to Clay, and he had entrenched his position as its leader too firmly for a change, though many, late in the campaign, recognized its desirability.

The cordiality with which Webster had accepted Clay as the party leader gradually cooled as the campaign progressed. His loyalty was beyond question in 1830. He assured Clay in May that he would necessarily be the leader of the party in support of protection and internal improvements.¹²⁴ The people could not be restrained, he wrote in the summer of that year, from making him a candidate against Jackson.¹²⁵ Influenced perhaps by an increasing conviction that Clay would not be successful and perhaps by doubt as to Clay's loyalty to the protective tariff, a change was perceptible in Webster's attitude by the fall of 1831. It was also clear that Anti-Masons could not be persuaded to endorse Clay.¹²⁶ The election of the state legislature in Kentucky,

¹²³ Edward Everett, A. H. Everett to Clay, Charlestown, Mass., October 29, 1832. Clay MSS. Edward Everett had been cool towards Clay's candidacy at the beginning of the campaign. Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 86. Abbott Lawrence, a wealthy merchant of Boston, believed that Adams agreed with the Everetts but that their letter did not reflect the opinion of a majority of the voters in Massachusetts. Lawrence to Clay, Boston, October 30, 1832. Clay MSS.

¹²⁴ Webster to Clay, Washington, May 29, 1830. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 276.

¹²⁵ Webster to Clay, Washington, June 4, 1830. Webster, *Writings* (National Edition), XVI. 205.

¹²⁶ Ambrose Spencer to Webster, Albany, October 24, 1831. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, p. 24.

August, 1831, was regarded as a critical point in the campaign, and its indecisive result gave a convincing proof that Clay's strength was not as sound as it had been supposed. Before this election Stephen White, a personal friend of Webster, told the National Republican state central committee of Massachusetts that friends of Webster would continue their support of Clay except in the event of his death or defeat in Kentucky, "both equally fatal to his success." Should either of these contingencies occur Webster's own candidacy, he believed, should be considered.¹²⁷ The growth of the nullification movement in South Carolina suggested that issues were at stake involving constitutional theories of more fundamental importance than those which Clay represented. This same fact probably contributed to the decline of Webster's interest in Clay and suggested to him the conception of a new party organized openly in defense of nationalist principles with himself as its leader which developed more fully in 1833. According to White, the leaders of all parties whom he had met in his travels were well disposed, and there was a strong disposition to "create a *constitutional party* and to place you at the head of it."¹²⁸ Webster feared, he wrote to Clay in October, 1831, an attack upon the constitution in the approaching

¹²⁷ White to Webster, New York, August 7, 1831. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, pp. 161, 162.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

session of Congress. "Not only the Tariff, but the Constitution itself, in its elementary and fundamental provisions will be assailed with talent, vigor and union. Everything is to be debated as if nothing had been settled." He therefore urged Clay to reënter the Senate where his leadership was needed, and it is significant that in this letter, written not long before the convention, no mention is made of Clay's presidential aspirations.¹²⁹ All thought of a new party, if indeed it had been seriously considered, was of course abandoned for the duration of the campaign.

The Bank issue instead of improving Clay's position was the most important factor in the re-election of Jackson, a result that was made doubly certain by dissensions within the opposition. Adams had been defeated and eliminated as a presidential candidate, partly in consequence of his lack of talents as a politician; Clay suffered the same fate because in his long and active political career he had made too many enemies and had in part lost the confidence of the people. His defeat eliminated the last of the available candidates who were closely identified with the traditions of the party. Webster remained, but at no time in this period were his chances good even for a nomination by a united party. The way was therefore clear for a new departure.

¹²⁹ Webster to Clay, Boston, October 5, 1831. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 318.

CHAPTER III

THE CRISIS OF 1833

THE nullification crisis in the winter of 1832-1833, by justifying Webster's fear of an impending attack upon the constitution as it was then interpreted, threw party lines into confusion. Attention was called to the fundamental problem of the proper relations between the state and federal governments, a question to which all parties, in trying to avoid vital issues, had paid perfunctory respect, or which they had entirely ignored. While the greater number of the friends of nullification were or had been Democrats, not a few National Republicans like Clay found it expedient to be somewhat tolerant, and, on the other hand, a considerable fraction of the Democratic party endorsed Jackson's vigorous policy. Out of this confusion in 1833 appeared the possibility of a new alignment of parties upon the issue of maintaining the authority of the federal government. The issues of the previous campaign were temporarily set aside. The attempt to secure a longer lease of life for the Bank had been decisively defeated, internal improvement made no immediate appeal, and friends of protection found much to

approve in the Nullification Proclamation and in Jackson's message of January 16. Moreover, the opposition was at odds within itself with reference to the President's policy as expressed in these documents. Some were disposed, because of state rights predilections or for political reasons, to await events, but friends of federal supremacy, regardless of party ties, endorsed Jackson's policy with enthusiasm, the more heartily in some cases because of the consideration that the tariff laws were those which were to be enforced.

A realignment of parties upon the "union" issue would have involved at least a temporary agreement between Webster and Jackson.¹ Difficult as it would have been to harmonize their ideas in regard to specific political problems, powerful influences were at work in 1833 to bring them together. The way was prepared by Webster's endorsement of the proclamation. A copy of that document reached Boston as he was about to leave for the opening of Congress. So important did he consider the occasion that he delayed his de-

¹ The attention of the writer was called to this problem by a discussion of the relations between party leaders at this time in Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 664 ff. A conversation with Clay in 1849 suggested to Van Buren the part which Webster played in the events of 1833. His remarks are not exclusively based upon memory, for in certain cases he refers to historical sources. Information is given bearing upon the relations between Webster and Jackson which does not appear elsewhere. In regard to his own motives, Van Buren's explanations probably are not entirely accurate. His distrust of Webster's personal integrity and his distinct liking for Clay (p. 665) led him to attribute Webster's actions to selfish ambitions. For these reasons his inferences from facts need to be checked wherever possible by information drawn from other sources.

parture in order to speak at a meeting in Faneuil Hall called for the purpose of considering the situation in South Carolina and the President's proclamation.²

The Almighty Power only knows, [he said] whether, when we meet again, it will be as citizens of Massachusetts only. . . . The general principles of the Proclamation are such as I heartily approve. I esteem them to be the only true principles of the constitution. . . . In this way of meeting the crisis, I shall give the President my entire and cordial support. . . . If the Government, on this first trial, shall be found not able to keep all the States in their proper places, from that moment the whole Union is virtually dissolved. Whatever link be struck from this golden chain, breaks the whole.³

² *Ibid.*, p. 680. Van Buren attributed the call for this meeting to Webster, but the report of its proceedings supports the conclusion that it was the result of a general desire among those who approved Jackson's policy.

³ *National Intelligencer*, December 22, 1832, quoting *Boston Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, Extra, December 18, 1832. This speech is not printed in any edition of Webster's works, but the text is given in an appendix to G. T. Curtis, *Life of Webster* (N. Y., 1872), I, 590-592. Webster was reported by March to have heard of the proclamation for the first time when on his way to Washington. C. W. March, *Reminiscences* (N. Y., 1850), pp. 187, 188. This version was used by Curtis in his first edition (*Webster*, I, 484) but this error was later corrected in an appendix. A series of resolutions, reported in the *Intelligencer* cited above, which were adopted by this meeting, not only endorsed Jackson's policy but also read into the proclamation constitutional theories that substantially agreed with those of Webster in his debate with Hayne. It was probably to this interpretation that Van Buren had reference in suggesting that these resolutions were not entirely satisfactory to Jackson. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 698. H. G. Otis, an old Federalist, also endorsed the proclamation, but he was not the presiding officer as suggested by Morison, *Otis*, II, 292. According to the report in the *Intelligencer*, Charles Wells, who was then Mayor of Boston, acted as chairman. With a view doubtless to preventing an untimely discussion of topics which might have given rise to criticism of other phases of the administration's policy, the chairman restricted the speakers to the two points specified in the call for the meeting.

Webster was not alone among National Republicans in his approval of Jackson's position. The *Western Reserve Chronicle* reported that the proclamation "was hailed as the harbinger of glad tidings by the opposers of the administration. . . . It is worthy of remark that the returning sanity of the President was hailed by spontaneous approbation."⁴ It was the opinion of the "Spy in Washington" that the proclamation had effected a revolution in the personnel of parties, that it had been endorsed by many "whom it was supposed nothing could have reconciled to the present chief magistrate."⁵ Ambrose Spencer, an influential politician in New York, thought Jackson's reelection fortunate in view of the turn which affairs had taken.⁶ Chancellor Kent was informed by his nephew in New York City.

We are all Jackson men here . . . and really the old gentleman does put his name to the most excellent documents. Nothing could be more able than his last message, and if he is not thwarted by the House he will I believe preserve the Union, and what is more keep it in such a state that it will be worth preserving.⁷

⁴ *National Intelligencer*, January 2, 1833.

⁵ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, January 21, 1833. The *Enquirer* was in favor of settling the crisis by a compromise, and was thus disposed to minimize its importance. "A temporary excitement is pervading the Nation. How long will it continue? Will the new friends which Gen. Jackson has acquired be faithful?" It is known that Matthew L. Davis, an influential journalist, wrote under the pseudonym of the "Spy in Washington." Frederick Hudson, *Journalism in the United States* (N. Y., 1875), p. 216.

⁶ A. Spencer to Webster, Albany, February 21, 1833. Webster MSS.

⁷ William Kent to James Kent, New York, January 30, 1833. Kent MSS. Library of Congress. It was thought that Jackson, assured of a second term, would follow policies more in harmony with those of the opposition.

Pleasants wrote from Richmond that the few who still called themselves Federalists had to a man endorsed the proclamation and that some of Clay's friends had given their support to the President, in order to be on the winning side or because of their dislike of nullification.⁸

Evidence soon began to accumulate that the disorganized National Republicans were not agreed in this point of view. The change which occurred in the attitude of the *Intelligencer*, their most important newspaper, toward nullification and Jackson's policy is indicative of the growing divergence of opinion within the party. This journal had been outspoken in its censure of nullification before that movement aroused the President to issue the proclamation.⁹ When events indicated that he would drive his former friends in South Carolina into opposition, its remarks in regard to the situation became milder.¹⁰ Minor flaws in the proclamation were picked out for criticism, and in the way of approval it contented itself with an acknowledgment of the obvious fact that

⁸ J. H. Pleasants to John Tyler, Richmond, January 1, 1833. L. G. Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers* (Richmond, 1884), I. 451, 452.

⁹ The nullification movement was denounced during the summer of 1831 in a series of articles under the title, "The Crisis," as the most serious danger which the country had faced since the Hartford Convention. *National Intelligencer*, August 27, 31, September 3, 7, 1831.

¹⁰ In reply to a question as to their attitude on the nullification question the editors replied that it could be found in the articles referred to above. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1832.

it was a powerful document.¹¹ In order not to give offense to possible recruits only brief mention was made of the progress in Congress of the "force bill" and even of Clay's compromise tariff measure. There was as yet no great difference of opinion in the ranks of the party in regard to the Bank issue; accordingly it was kept constantly before its readers in preference to the troublesome nullification question, which was adding to the popularity of the administration.

Clay, like the *Intelligencer*, was critical of the proclamation,¹² and he found it advisable not to take an active part in support of the "force bill." Webster, on the other hand, coöperated with the administration in carrying out Jackson's recommendations. It is said on good authority that he was asked by a member of Jackson's cabinet to

¹¹ "There are some exceptional features in it, and particularly the personality which is thrown into it, even in the very caption, where we find the name of the President most conspicuous. This is a departure from usage, as is also the allusion to the President's nativity, both of which had been well avoided. The Proclamation, however, is a powerful composition, and cannot fail to produce a great sensation; whether for good or evil we have some doubt." *Ibid.*, December 11, 1832. Later it was explained that the phrase "for good or evil" referred to the effect upon the relative standing of the nullification and union parties in South Carolina. *Ibid.*, December 13, 1833.

¹² He thought there were some good things in it especially in the part dealing with the power of the judiciary, but "there are some entirely too ultra for me, and which I cannot stomach. A proclamation ought to have been issued weeks ago, but I think it should have been a very different paper from the present, which, I apprehend, will irritate instead of allaying any excited feeling." Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, December 12, 1832. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 345.

lead the friends of the bill in the Senate,¹³ and that on his suggestion certain changes were made.¹⁴ Although Jackson's friends were supporting the Verplanck bill, which would reduce duties by one-half in two years, Webster was not convinced that the President intended to abandon the principle of protection, for he believed that Jackson personally did not approve the radical reduction which this measure involved. Webster was confident, he wrote to William Sullivan, that Jackson did not wish the bill to pass and that he would prefer to make a direct issue with nullification and then to revise the tariff when the

¹³ March, *Reminiscences*, p. 199. Van Buren believed that this book had been endorsed by Webster. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 701.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235. The "Spy in Washington" noted the important rôle played by Webster. "The echoes from the palace announce that Mr. Webster is considered the staff on which reliance must be placed in the Senate. . . . His great and commanding talents are now to be called into action, in defences of those opinions and those principles which, in early life, were the basis of his political education. At a moment, the most unexpected to him, to his friends, and to his country, he finds himself called upon to sustain the measures of the administration, on the ground that they are such as the federal party of 1798 would have sustained. . . . Can Mr. Webster resist these appeals? He cannot and will not. . . . Yet a few days, and his influence with the President and his cabinet will be equalled by few; surpassed by none. . . . The Federalists, with a portion of the Clay men, have taken under their charge the measures of the administration. Mark what I say. Without these new allies, Gen. Jackson would stand almost alone, in both Houses of Congress." *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, February 2, 1833. Webster's support of the force bill was resented by many Democrats who were anxious to see the question amicably settled. C. C. Cambreling, an influential Democratic leader from New York in the House, wrote to Van Buren that "the real friends of the administration are calm and anxiously desiring that all difficulties may be adjusted." Cambreling to Van Buren, Washington, February 5, 1833. Van Buren MSS. Library of Congress.

administration would not appear to be yielding to force.¹⁵ When Clay assumed responsibility for an apparent abandonment of the tariff in his scheme for a compromise he brought upon himself the opposition which Webster and his friends had made to the Verplanck bill. The scheme was probably introduced with full knowledge that Webster would oppose its passage; a draft had been shown to him,¹⁶ and he had been present at a meeting of a Senate committee at which it was discussed.¹⁷

The trend of events, indicating an unusual co-operation between Jackson and Webster and a sharp divergence of policy within the opposition, gave rise to a general discussion of a possible

¹⁵ Webster to William Sullivan, January 3, 1833. Curtis, *Webster*, I. 436, 437. Van Buren represents Jackson as sincerely in favor of affording relief to South Carolina, whereas Webster resisted the passage of Clay's compromise which would have this effect. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 663.

¹⁶ Webster to Hiram Ketchum, Washington, January 18, 1838. Curtis, *Webster*, I. 440, 441. Webster was at this time defending his record on the tariff questions of 1833 and seeking material with which to attack Clay on this point.

¹⁷ Webster to Nathan Appleton, February (?), 1833. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, pp. 179, 180. Cf. Clay to Francis Brooke, Senate Chamber, February 14, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 349, 350. The friends of protection at first were generally agreed in interpreting Clay's compromise as a surrender of the principle at issue. This point of view was expressed by Niles. "Mr. Clay's new tariff project will be received like a crash of thunder in the winter season. . . . We . . . cannot go with him in a measure which contains the surrendry of a power that is vital to the influence of the United States." *Niles' Register*, XLIII. 401. An active campaign was inaugurated by Clay's friends in New England to convince the friends of protection that the bill was not in fact destructive of the protective principle. Peley Sprague to Clay, Boston, March 19, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 354-356; Abbott Lawrence to Clay, Boston, March 26, 1833. *Ibid.*, pp. 357, 358.

formation of parties upon new issues. The evidence is sufficiently abundant and varied, not only from newspaper editorials but also from private letters, to justify the conclusion that for a time in the spring and summer of 1833 there was a serious possibility that this would take place. The "Spy in Washington" suggested this as a probability. If his speculations in regard to the effect of the proclamation were correct, "then has the proclamation laid the foundation for a new grouping of parties. The talented and ancient leaders of federalism, are marching forth in solid column from their retirement. . . . They tell you—'we rally round the Chief who now commands!'"¹⁸ Webster's resolutions on the tariff placed him at the head of the tariff forces in the opinion of the *Baltimore Gazette*. It anticipated an understanding between Webster and the administration which would maintain the principle of protection.¹⁹ P. P. F. Degrand²⁰ wrote to Nicholas Biddle:

Ever since the appearance of the President's Proclamation, relative to South Carolina, several of my leading

¹⁸ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, January 21, 1833.

¹⁹ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, February 18, 1833. This newspaper was published at Philadelphia.

²⁰ Degrand was an immigrant of French descent. Without large means himself, he was active in the promotion of railroads in Massachusetts. He was much ridiculed during his life for the extravagance of his predictions which however "have since been more than realized." Justin Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston, 1630-1880* (Boston, 1882), IV. 135, 136. The Library of Congress has the files of the *Boston Weekly Report of Public Sales and Arrivals, 1819-1827*, a publication edited by Degrand.

friends, as well as myself, have had a notion that the consequences of the decided stand, which the President takes 'against State Rights (so mis-called) and in favor of the Judiciary,—*would necessarily ultimately lead to an alliance, offensive and defensive, between Jackson and the Party that goes against the mis-called State Rights;—for the judiciary;—for internal improvements;—for the tariff; and for the bank,*'—*because* Jackson would find himself at war with many of his old friends; and as a President of the United States cannot stand upon nothing, he must necessarily seek and husband new ones.²¹

Niles thought that the old parties did not know where they stood upon the new issues. "Some 'guess' that they are on the banks of Newfoundland; but the fog is so thick, and the water so much disturbed, that neither the quadrant nor the lead line renders accustomed service."²² The speculations of the *Salem Gazette* as to the current rearrangement of parties are of particular interest. As Degrand had suggested, the issues which had been defeated in the two preceding campaigns might be favorably affected.

Recent political events make it plain that parties must be taken into a new draft. The late combinations have been completely broken up—they have *clubbed the battalion*—the front has been changed to the rear, and the flanks to the center. In this pell-mell confusion, it will take some time for the stragglers to rally under new banners and to understand new signals. *Clay and Calhoun* have combined Nullification and National Republicanism—the *West* and the *South* are henceforth in close

²¹ Degrand to Biddle, Boston, February 15, 1833. Biddle MSS.

²² *Niles' Register*, XLIV. 1.

alliance, and the National Republicans of the Free States are henceforth excluded from the communion with any party.

The consequence may be that a change will take place in public policy. *Measures* of state we have a long time witnessed are merely the counters with which gambling politicians keep their game. The United States Bank, among other measures, may be favorably affected; for those who have hitherto thought it a piece of good *calculation* to oppose the renewal of its charter for the sake of gaining political influence may hereafter think it politic to support the renewal for the purpose of gaining other friends and from fear of losing the friends they already have.²³

The possibility that Webster was either seeking a cabinet office under Jackson or would accept one if it were offered him was widely discussed.²⁴ To an objection from a Democratic source that the party could not forget Webster's past association with Federalism, Hammond of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* thought that this would be a minor difficulty. "Mr. Webster can be as easily 'dyed in wool' as Mr. Louis McLane, if he will only consent to the necessary immersion."²⁵ However, all rumors of a difference with Clay that would drive him into an alliance with Jackson were scouted by the *Intelligencer*.²⁶

At the close of the short session in March, 1833, Webster and Clay were apparently upon

²³ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, March 12, 1833.

²⁴ *New York Daily Advertiser*, February 15, 1833.

²⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, February 21, 1833.

²⁶ *National Intelligencer*, May 3, 1833.

the best of terms;²⁷ nevertheless the differences between them had not been arranged. Clay wrote to Biddle: "As for your friend Mr. W[ebster] (he is determined not to allow me to consider him mine) nothing I can do seems right in his mind." Biddle was asked "to soothe him on his return. You hold a large flask of oil and know well how to pour it out."²⁸ As the president of the Bank, Biddle was not in a position nor was he disposed to act as a disinterested mediator. His first concern was to make use of every opportunity for the welfare of that institution,²⁹ and the split between the two National Republican leaders might be made to serve a useful purpose. When Webster rallied to the support of Jackson, a claim was established to his gratitude which could with careful management be used to the Bank's advantage. The removal of the deposits might by this means be prevented, and a new charter was not beyond the range of possibili-

²⁷ Nathan Sargent, *Public Men and Events* (Philadelphia, 1875), I. 241-243.

²⁸ Clay to Biddle, Washington, March 4, 1833. Biddle MSS.

²⁹ Biddle's attachment to the Bank is best illustrated in a letter of an earlier date, February, 1832, to C. J. Ingersoll. "Here am I, who have taken a fancy to this Bank and having built it up with infinite care am striving to keep it from being destroyed. . . . To me all other considerations are insignificant—I mean to stand by it and defend it with all the small faculties which Providence has assigned to me. I can go for no party in politics or religion—have no sympathy with Mr. Jackson or Mr. Clay or Mr. Wirt or Mr. Calhoun or Mr. Ellmaker or Mr. Van Buren." Biddle to C. J. Ingersoll, Philadelphia, February 11, 1832. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, 179.

ties.³⁰ If these results could have been counted upon as the certain consequences of the division between Clay and Webster, Biddle probably would have chosen to widen the breach rather than attempt to heal it. Their realization was too problematical however to warrant the burning of his bridges; accordingly, while he made what use he could of Webster's services to the administration, at the same time he used his influence to prevent a complete break between Webster and Clay in order to preserve a political force which would be available in the event of a failure to conciliate Jackson. This analysis of Biddle's motives and policy is illustrated and supported by the correspondence of the three men in the spring and summer of 1833.

Biddle recognized, in his reply to Clay's request, the importance of avoiding a division. It was of "great importance to the country not to permit the difference of sentiment on the tariff to produce any alienation between those who had hitherto acted in harmony on all other great public measures. . . ." To prevent an occasion for

³⁰ John Sargeant, a member of the House from Pennsylvania, wrote to Biddle that the combination between Calhoun, Clay, and their friends would cause the administration to react favorably to the Bank. "Against a combination that threatens to become so powerful, Van Buren will have to look for alliances in the North, I think, and in so doing will be obliged to give up his hostility to the Bank. It is quite possible, indeed, that he may come into conjunction with some of its most decided friends. In the meantime, Jackson's influence will by no means have the same weight as heretofore." Sargeant to Biddle, Washington, March 2, 1833. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

this undesirable result, Biddle had chosen to entertain Webster privately when he had recently passed through Philadelphia rather than to arrange a public dinner with the inevitable speeches. "In regard to the measure itself, he retains all the opinions he publicly expressed; but they are, I think, unaccompanied by anything of an unkind or unfriendly feeling toward yourself. . . . Your mutual friends seem to understand each other perfectly."³¹ In reply Clay acknowledged Biddle's efforts to prevent a further estrangement, and, on second thought, he saw in Webster's opposition to the compromise tariff a means of persuading the South that a decided victory had been won.³² The crisis would thus be brought to a satisfactory close and his own political position materially strengthened, since the victory would be the fruit of his leadership.

There now began a series of obscure negotiations the purpose of which was to prolong the coöperation between Webster and Jackson. Available evidence is not sufficient to justify an accurate estimate of the various influences that determined Webster's actions at this time, but it is clear that he was not only following his personal inclinations but was also acting on Biddle's ad-

³¹ Biddle to Clay, Philadelphia, March 25, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, pp. 356, 357. Dr. McGrane suggests that Biddle tried to change Webster's point of view in regard to the compromise. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 202, 203. The evidence in Biddle's letter scarcely justifies this conclusion.

³² Clay to Biddle, Ashland, April 10, 1833. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 202-204.

vice. The middleman in this negotiation seems to have been Edward Livingston, then Secretary of State. After his conversation with Biddle in Philadelphia, in the course of which the subject may well have been discussed, Webster wrote to Livingston suggesting that the latter "would not be averse to a confidential interchange of opinions upon topics that must arise, in the course of a short time and on which men will be obliged to act." It was suggested that a conference be arranged to take place in New York sometime in April.³³ Sufficient evidence exists to make it reasonably safe to assume that the two met during the summer of 1833, although the exact date is uncertain.³⁴ March³⁵ and Curtis³⁶ not only as-

³³ Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, pp. 181, 182. Professor Van Tyne notes that the MSS. is undated and has no address, but he identifies it as a letter to Clay. It is also printed in *Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (National Edition, Boston, 1903), XVI. 229, 230. It is there identified as a letter to Edward Livingston. Internal evidence, as well as the unfriendliness which existed between Clay and Webster at this time, indicates that the latter conclusion is probably correct. Webster refers to his correspondent's intention of going abroad. Livingston's appointment as minister to France was under consideration at this time, while there is no evidence that Clay had such intentions. Moreover, Clay had left Washington for the West at the time or before the letter was written. *National Intelligencer*, March 23, 1833. The contents of the letter show that the person to whom it was addressed was in Washington.

³⁴ Webster was probably in New York April 5, but apparently the interview was not held then. He was still there April 10, for on that date Biddle wrote to him at his New York address that Livingston would be there in a few days. Biddle to Webster, April 10, 1833. Biddle MSS. Webster may have seen Livingston at this time, but in any case, he wrote from Boston, April 13, that he had heard nothing from Livingston, but that he would hold himself in readiness to go to New York if necessary. Webster to Biddle, Boston, April 13, 1833. *Ibid.* A week later he wrote again from Boston that he had heard nothing from the elusive

sume that the conversation took place, but they also report that Livingston was authorized by the President to take up with Webster the question of his continued support of the administration, and that he acted upon this instruction in an interview with Webster in New York after the latter's return from his later tour of the West. According to March, it was generally believed by the friends of both men that a seat in the cabinet was offered and that an agreement was made impossible by differences upon the question of the deposits. This version cannot be accepted without reservation. Influenced perhaps by a desire to clear Webster of all suspicion of disloyalty to his party, it placed the responsibility for the negotiation upon Jackson and Livingston. There is reason to believe, however, that an arrangement with the administration through the agency of Livingston was most desirable from the point of view of Biddle and Webster. Furthermore, if a

Livingston. He thought that the Secretary was occupied with an inquiry in regard to the burning of the treasury building. Webster to Biddle, April 20, 1833. *Ibid.* The fire occurred March 31. *National Intelligencer*, April 1, 1833. These letters give no precise evidence of a meeting between the two men but they reveal clearly the eagerness with which it was desired by Biddle and Webster. Webster had at least one opportunity to talk with Livingston before he sailed for France. On Webster's return from his western tour both took the same boat from Philadelphia to New York. *National Gazette and Literary Register*, July 19, 1833. *National Intelligencer*, July 22, 1833.

⁸⁵ March, *Reminiscences*, pp. 249, 250.

⁸⁶ Curtis, *Webster*, I. 473. There is no first hand evidence, apparently, to support this conclusion. Livingston's papers might throw some light upon this question, but they are not at present available.

cabinet office was offered by Livingston, it is by no means certain that it faithfully represented Jackson's intentions. Van Buren wrote later that Jackson agreed with his own suspicions of the Secretary's loyalty to the administration.³⁷ It is probable that on another occasion, when he sketched a plan for an act to re-charter the Bank which would, he said, be approved by the President, he had taken an unwarranted liberty in anticipating Jackson's wishes.³⁸

Biddle repeatedly urged Webster in April to make his peace with the administration before it was too late to prevent a removal of the deposits, and Webster was not opposed to the suggestion. An arrangement was made with C. P. White a "politician of the Van Buren type" and a member of the House from the city of New York, to the effect that Webster's views upon the question of the deposits would be reported to Jackson.³⁹ Apparently this was done, for Webster wrote to Biddle after White's return that the removal had been decided upon: "I am afraid that the Presi-

³⁷ "We were well aware that he was more at his ease talking and not infrequently in acting upon public questions in the company of Mr. Webster and Mr. Biddle than with us, but we could afford to indulge him." Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 708.

³⁸ C. J. Ingersoll to Biddle, Washington, February 23, 1832. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 184, 185. Cf. J. S. Bassett, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (N. Y., 1911), II. 616. However, Catterall asserts that Livingston probably reported Jackson correctly. Catterall, *Second Bank*, pp. 224-228.

³⁹ Webster to Biddle, New York, Wednesday morning. Biddle MSS. This letter is undated but internal evidence identifies it as having been written in the latter part of March or the first part of April.

dent has settled it as a thing to be done.”⁴⁰ Biddle immediately replied:

I have no information of the intended removal of the deposits, though my opinion is that they will not dare to remove. Nevertheless it is very desirable that whatever is done in the way of pacification should be done soon—for if the deposits are withdrawn, it will be a declaration of war which cannot be recalled.⁴¹

Two days later urgent advice to the same effect was sent to Webster.⁴² After his return to Boston Webster wrote, April 21, that the political consequences which would probably result from the removal had been brought to the attention of the President by an influential friend of the President. It would “create warm opposition of the North, and drive those, who would support General Jackson in all just measures, back to the arms of C.[lay] and C.[alhoun].”⁴³ Thus, by means of Democratic channels, even assuming the doubtful character of the Livingston interview, Webster adroitly brought to Jackson’s attention the price which would have to be paid for a continuation of his services. His motives, however, were not restricted to a desire to serve the interests of Nicholas Biddle and the Bank, for he considered the possibility of coöperating with the administration after the removal of the deposits in Sep-

⁴⁰ Webster to Biddle, New York, April 7, 1833. *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Biddle to Webster, Philadelphia, April 8, 1833. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 202.

⁴² Biddle to Webster, Philadelphia, April 10, 1833. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁴³ Webster to Biddle, Boston, April 21, 1833. Biddle MSS.

tember had eliminated Biddle's interests in the premises.

Circumstances attending the extensive journeys of party chieftains in the summer of 1833 furnish further evidence that a possible realignment of parties was contemplated. The opportunity offered by the adjournment of Congress was seized for the purpose of mending political fences that had weakened or perhaps of building new ones. Especially important for present purposes were the tours of Jackson and Webster which made possible an expression of mutual esteem by their friends. The reception given to Jackson by Webster's associates in New England and that accorded to Webster by Jackson's in the West could not fail to strengthen the feeling of good-will between them. Webster had at first planned to be in Boston in order to welcome Jackson personally. His absence, he wrote to Secretary Cass, would be open to misrepresentation; he would therefore cut short his own tour in order to be in Boston at the proper time.⁴⁴ For unexplained reasons his plans did not materialize in this respect; he was still in the West when Jackson appeared in Boston.⁴⁵ National Republican newspapers saw

⁴⁴ Webster to Cass (undated). Webster, *Private Correspondence*, I. 536, 537. This letter was in reply to one from Cass in which it was said that Jackson would be in New England about June 20. Cass to Webster, April 17, 1833. Curtis, *Webster*, I. 460, 461.

⁴⁵ According to Van Buren, Webster's absence was intentional. It would be easier to approach Jackson's friends in the West than as the chief of a reception committee in Boston. Moreover, Webster knew that he could not lead his party in New England to support Jackson. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 690-694.

in Van Buren's presence in Jackson's party a move on his part to strengthen himself with New England Democrats in view of the campaign of 1836,⁴⁶ but Webster was informed that his true motive was to watch Jackson in order to prevent a suspected effort by Federalists "to coax and cajol the president."⁴⁷ Preparations were made in Boston to give Jackson's reception a non-partisan character,⁴⁸ and the *Washington Globe* frowned upon any attempt on the part of overzealous Democrats in New England to keep the President to themselves.⁴⁹ Degrand informed Biddle that Jackson's reception was in fact the work chiefly of Webster's friends. The resolution to invite Jackson had been introduced in the House by

⁴⁶ *New York Daily Advertiser*, May 3, 1833. Cf. *New Hampshire Patriot* in the *United States Telegraph*, July 12, 1833.

⁴⁷ D. B. Ogden to Webster, New York, April 27, 1833. Webster MSS.

⁴⁸ The *New York American*, a newspaper that took pride in having opposed Jackson at every turn since 1823, reported that his reception in New York, and "we believe it was so in Philadelphia" was distinctly a party affair under the management of Democratic leaders. "The mass of citizens, the clergy, the learned professions, and the great middle class could not approach him at all." *New York American*, June 15, 1833.

⁴⁹ Quoting the *Boston Post*, the *Intelligencer* at first attributed to Massachusetts Democrats an intention to make the President's reception a partisan affair. *National Intelligencer*, April 23, 1833. The next day it acknowledged that such was not the desire of the Democratic authorities in Washington. In this connection was quoted a statement of the *Globe* of April 23. "If Massachusetts through her legislature deems it proper to mark the visit of the President to that State with any token of personal respect, we should consider an attempt, on the part of those assuming to be exclusive party friends, to repeal such kind intentions upon the ground that they proceed from political opponents, not only as illiberal to those proffering the courtesy, but derogatory to the object of it." *Ibid.*, April 24, 1833.

Stephen White, who moreover had left Webster in the West in order to act as a chairman of the legislative committee appointed in the President's honor. He was welcomed not only as chief executive but as one who had expressed New England principles in the proclamation. As a result,

Jackson is very much pleased with his visit to this quarter and grateful for these attentions and *quite gratified* that his 'Union must be preserved' is fully sustained here. . . . In fact, it cannot be denied that a sympathy is excited in his breast and between him and those who approached him here and this sympathy pervades both.

The conclusion was, in Degrand's opinion, clear that Webster "no longer supports Clay:—but stands forth as 'the defender of the constitution,' i.e. 'of the administration' while the 'administration hold the Proclamation as their standard'."⁵⁰ Fears were aroused among Democrats that Jackson was approaching the Federalist point of view. These fears were expressed in the vernacular of the famous Downing letters in a report of an imaginary conversation with "Jack Downing."

We told him 'we knew a thing or two; and as there wasn't a better Fed. in the country than Old Hickory we should give him a gun perhaps.' Jack looked grave, and nodded, and said he had warned 'the Ginerál,' but it made

⁵⁰ P. P. F. Degrand to Biddle, Boston, July 4, 1833. Biddle MSS. According to Degrand, "True Blue Jackson" men had co-operated with National Republicans in the election of Benjamin Gorham to congress, and it had been suggested that this coöperation be continued in the next gubernatorial election.

his heart ache to see the old man so budge with H. G. Otis and Bill Sullivan. 'But I'll tell you what' continued Jack, . . . 'I'll fix myself in Downingville, and I'll stay the torrent of Federalism! Thunder and mittens, there is strange things going on in the world. Van Buren is chucking the Hero into the bosoms of the Feds.'⁵¹

The *Intelligencer*, true to its policy of covering up all traces of division within the party, interpreted Jackson's enthusiastic reception in New England as evidence of a sincerely national spirit, not as an expression of restlessness on the part of Webster and his friends.⁵² National Republicans in Boston met, immediately after Jackson's departure, to repair whatever damage had been done to the party by his visit. A dinner was held, as Rufus Choate informed Webster, the immediate purpose of which "was to keep our own ranks; and to see that none of our members were carried away by the recent flow of good feeling." Choate thought there had been no "particular unfriendliness to the President"; but Webster was warned that "Our Jackson men here are Van Buren men."⁵³ The result of Jackson's excursion into territory that had formerly been enemy country was a practical demonstration of the support which New England gave to his nationalist policy. Nothing definite was appar-

⁵¹ *National Intelligencer*, July 8, 1833, quoting the *Portland Advertiser*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, July 1, 1833.

⁵³ Choate to Webster, Salem, August 12, 1833. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, p. 184.

ently done, however, to bind his relations with Webster more closely.

While Webster's friends were giving Jackson a friendly reception in New England, the favor was being returned by Jackson men in the West. The *Intelligencer* reported that "Mr. Webster has wrought little less than a miracle upon the feuds and divisions in the western country. He has fairly extinguished the one and obliterated the other."⁵⁴ A correspondent of the *United States Telegraph* wrote from Cincinnati, June 18, that Webster was there "gladdening all hearts. Tomorrow he partakes of a public dinner, in which all parties unite, but in which the Jackson party have taken the lead. Their enthusiasm has been as great as ours."⁵⁵ The *Louisville Journal* noticed the friendliness of Democrats: "Wherever he goes, the friends of the administration are peculiarly zealous to do him honor. The very men, who, a year ago, were daily denouncing him as a Hartford convention traitor and the corrupt hireling of the Bank, are now proud of the privilege of touching but the hem of his garment."⁵⁶ W. T. Barry, postmaster general under Jackson, sent to Van Buren a report of Webster's welcome by the Jackson men of Cincinnati. He believed

⁵⁴ *National Intelligencer*, July 11, 1833. Cf. J. B. McMaster, *Daniel Webster* (N. Y., 1902), pp. 221-225. Professor McMaster made no attempt to interpret the political significance of the welcome given Webster in the West.

⁵⁵ *United States Telegraph*, July 8, 1833.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, July 5, 1833.

that Webster was aware that the Democrats were responsible for his warm reception. "Mr. Clay's friends and especially his bank friends, were cold, and are dissatisfied with the speech of Mr. Webster at the dinner. It was a patriotic affair in which the present administration was highly complimented."⁵⁷ At Pittsburg he was again cordially received by at least a part of Jackson's friends. He was welcomed, according to the *Pittsburg Advocate*, as the defender of the constitution. The editor knew no higher praise than to compare his services with those of Jackson at New Orleans.

Mr. Webster now occupies a station before the American people, very similar to that in which Gen. Jackson found himself after the battle of New Orleans. [When nullification had been met by the President], what did Daniel Webster do? Did he respond to the call of the Executive, or did he cling to party? With the Constitution in his hand, he flung defiance in the teeth of his assailants. . . . It is this that has attached so many of the President's friends to Mr. Webster.⁵⁸

Other Democratic newspapers in Pittsburg, however, did not join the chorus of praise. One thought his reputation much exaggerated and confessed a preference for certain members of the city bar as models of true eloquence. It was noted that his audience, which had evidently been drawn from all classes, had not been responsive:

⁵⁷ W. T. Barry to Van Buren, July 7, 1833. Van Buren MSS.

⁵⁸ *New York American*, July 22, 1833. Cf. *United States Telegraph*, July 23, 1833.

"if we except a faint attempt to cheer him which 'proved no go'. The Jacksonites would not join in and they are the only boys that can cheer a man properly."⁵⁹ Another recognized his ability, but it was careful to explain that he was welcomed "not as a political partisan, but as a fellow citizen. . . . In his reception everything of a political tendency was carefully avoided."⁶⁰

The trend toward a friendly understanding between Webster and Jackson was regarded with alarm by certain groups within the Democratic party, as newspaper comment indicates. Democratic opinion in New England was especially hostile.⁶¹ The *Pennsylvanian*, a Democratic journal, predicted that the party in that section would refuse to coöperate with Webster.⁶² Isaac Hill charged him with hypocritical motives in his support of the proclamation because he had condemned Jackson's administration not long before that document was published. Moreover, he had coöperated with Calhoun in the campaign of

⁵⁹ *New Hampshire Patriot*, July 29, 1833, quoting the *Pittsburg Manufacturer*.

⁶⁰ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, July 22, 1833, quoting the *Pittsburg Democrat*.

⁶¹ *Boston Statesman*, January 12, 1833.

⁶² *Pennsylvanian*, July 23, 1833. This editorial offered advice to Webster which was not without a serious significance in spite of its humorous tone. "Curl your hair, coquette a little—be cool, cautious and roundabout—talk of patriotism, piety, and purity—don't touch anti-masonry—don't go where cholera is—avoid crowded places—vote for our friend Blair for next printer—cut Clay and all his clan—and to conclude, spend the month of August at Nahant, and take a peep at the sea serpent."

1832,⁶³ a charge which was not without foundation. On another occasion Hill wrote that the enthusiastic reception which the National Republicans in Massachusetts had given Jackson indicated a complete want of principle on the part of men who had opposed Jackson in the last two elections.⁶⁴ There were certain material advantages in remaining in the minority while the national party retained power which a politician like Hill could appreciate. The control of the federal patronage for that section was in the hands of Hill and his fellow politicians, and an alliance with Webster would involve a division of the spoils with new allies. Most important of all was the intense hostility which the New England Democrats, the workers in the towns and the poor farmers far from markets or tilling an infertile soil, felt for their more fortunate neighbors.⁶⁵ Finding his interest to be in opposition to a realignment of parties, Hill made effective use of the cry of "Federalist" to deter any members of his party who looked favorably upon a union with Webster.⁶⁶

The position of the *United States Telegraph* and its editor, Duff Green, as the mouthpiece of the "southern rights" section of the opposition

⁶³ *Boston Statesman*, September 7, 1833.

⁶⁴ *New Hampshire Patriot*, July 15, 1833.

⁶⁵ A. B. Darling, "Jacksonian Democracy in Massachusetts, 1824-1848," *American Historical Review*, XXIX, 271-278.

⁶⁶ *New Hampshire Patriot*, July 12, 1833.

made it an interested commentator upon evidence pointing to a possible understanding between Jackson and Webster. Two purposes apparently influenced Green's editorials dealing with this subject: a desire to discredit Webster as a leader of the National Republican party by arousing suspicion of his party loyalty and a reluctance to see Jackson's position strengthened by the addition of Webster and his friends. The attainment of both objects would be aided by exposing on every occasion information or rumors of a *rap-prochment* to the searching light of a pitiless publicity. The *Telegraph* persistently asserted that the real purpose of Jackson's tour was to secure the support of Webster's friends for Van Buren in the next campaign. While the President was on his way to New England, the charge was made that the *Globe*, on behalf of the administration, had made advances to New England interests by hinting that the tariff might be modified for the purpose of protecting the growers of wool and the manufacturers of the finer grades of woolen cloths.⁶⁷ The tour had been a failure, it was announced after Jackson's return, and in due time the *Telegraph* reported that the *Albany Argus* had attempted to explain away the *Globe's* apparent concession to protection in order to conciliate the southern wing of the party. Like the Federalists of the North, the *Globe* was urging

⁶⁷ *United States Telegraph*, May 28, 29, 1833.

"since the quasi-assent of the northern Democrats to the Proclamation, that there was no difference between the parties, and that they should go share and share alike."⁶⁸

A pronounced change promptly occurred in the political situation when the order for the removal of deposits was made in September. Conditions no longer favored a far-reaching reorganization of parties. The motive disappeared which had caused Biddle to attempt, through Webster, a reconciliation with the administration. The removal of the deposits emphasized the fiscal policy of the administration and thereby brought forward an issue in regard to which Webster was irreconcilably at odds with Jackson. Accordingly, when the new Congress assembled in December, Biddle at once became vitally interested in consolidating the opposition in support of an attempt to administer a rebuke to the President.

The new interests evident in the editorial policy of the *National Gazette*, a newspaper that was generally known as the "bank organ," were indicative of the desires of the Bank and its friends. In July, before it was known that the removal had been definitely adopted as the policy of the

⁶⁸ According to Green, northern Democrats had pretended to have a certain interest in state rights for a time following the proclamation in order to maintain their strength in the South. "Finding their mistake, they are now willing to cast aside all disguise, and abandon State Rights in all its forms and features, and rush into consolidation." This policy had been adopted to enable Van Buren to compete with Webster for the support of the Federalists. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1833.

administration, great advantages for nationalist policies were seen in a possible realignment of parties.

The main and very serious distinction of American parties will ere long be, that of the Unionists, on the one hand, defending the supremacy and integrity of our National and Federal System, under the plain text and spirit, and old apprehension of the Constitution; and, on the other, the disaffected Nullifiers and half-Nullifiers, rallying under all sorts of real and spurious State-rights. . . . The *Unionists* (now in the great majority of the people) will have something more to do for the final triumph of their cause than to resist the theory and practice of nullification; it will be essential on their side, that the national defenses and plans of internal improvement, and the establishments which secure an independent judiciary, a sound currency, and abundant revenue, and a domestic supply of manufacturers, should be preserved.⁶⁹

The removal of the deposits convinced the *Gazette* that it had mistaken the source of the real danger to the country. The nullification movement and even the disorganized condition of the currency "though evils of magnitude that require attention and deserve solicitude, yet are of considerably less moment and urgency than the recent measures and general doctrines of the Executive branch at Washington, in which we include the two cabinets of the President, and the *Globe*, the official organ and champion."⁷⁰ With the opening of the Congress a still more immediate need was felt for the aid of the southern wing of the

⁶⁹ *National Gazette and Literary Register*, July 27, 1833.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, November 26, 1833.

opposition; accordingly, the menace of nullification was discounted. Association with Calhoun was no longer objectionable after the tariff question had been arranged by means of the compromise. "There is no longer immediate danger from Southern nullification—but that which is enthroned at Washington is instant, active and formidable to the highest degree."⁷¹ Alleged excesses on the part of Jackson and his cabinet had deadened the enthusiasm aroused by the proclamation, and a majority of those who had opposed Calhoun and his southern friends were now forced to regard them as "only secondary or venial delinquents, dangerous to the Union in but a remote and inferior degree, even as desirable or necessary auxiliaries to combat much more guilty offenders and leaguers against the constitution and the essential weal of the Union."⁷²

The removal of the deposits did not immediately convince Webster that there should no longer be any thought of coöperating with Jackson. No reconciliation had been made with Clay. Webster had abandoned his plans to include Kentucky in the itinerary of his western tour on account of the prevalence of cholera.⁷³ There is

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1833.

⁷² *Ibid.*, December 30, 1833.

⁷³ Webster to Clay, Columbus, June 10, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 366; Webster to Clay, Chillicothe, June 22, 1833. *Ibid.*, pp. 366, 367. A journey to Kentucky, presumably for the purpose of a conference with Clay, had been planned by Biddle and Webster. Biddle to Clay, Philadelphia, March 25, 1833. *Ibid.*, p. 357.

no evidence that they had met when Clay, following Jackson's example, journeyed to New England. Webster's friends apparently took little or no part in the reception given to Clay in Boston.⁷⁴ That differences still existed between them and that there was still a possibility of an understanding between Webster and the President was evident at the beginning of the new session of Congress in December, 1833, when a question arose in the Senate over a point of organization.

The formation of the Senate committees had political significance at this time, especially the choice of the committee on finance, for it was certain that Jackson's attack upon the Bank would be referred to it. Both Webster and Clay saw in the organization of this important committee a means of advancing their political interests. As a result of Clay's influence, Webster was selected as its chairman and was thereby forced to take a positive position. It was to Clay's interest that this choice should be made at an early date and upon the question of the deposits; almost certainly Webster would thereby be compelled to make common cause with the opposition. Seeing a chance to make political capital from his chairmanship of the finance committee, Webster took advantage of the situation to approach the administration again.

⁷⁴ A comparison between the names of those prominent in the reception of Jackson and Clay indicate that Webster's friends while actively participating in the first were not involved in the second.

Since 1823, the Senate committees had been appointed by the president *pro tempore*, who was customarily chosen for this purpose by the Senate at the end of the preceding session, the vice-president absenting himself in order that the committees might be named by an official responsible to the majority.⁷⁵ The presiding officer at this time, Hugh L. White, an anti-Bank Democrat of Tennessee, would not serve the purpose of the opposition in its desire to control the membership of the finance committee in the interest of the Bank.⁷⁶ Accordingly, Peleg Sprague of Maine, a friend of Clay, moved, December 5, 1833, that "the 34th rule of the Senate shall be so amended as to read and stand as it did prior to the 24th day of November, 1823."⁷⁷ The purpose of this resolution was to take the power of naming the committees out of the hands of Judge White and place it in the Senate as a whole. Clay supported the motion with the argument that the committees should be so constituted that they would carry out the will of the majority. It finally passed by a strict party vote.⁷⁸ According to Van Buren, this power was

⁷⁵ Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 673, 674.

⁷⁶ Van Buren believed that Clay was willing to intrust the appointment of the committee to White if political considerations had not interfered. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

⁷⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 23 Congress, 1 Session, p. 12.

⁷⁸ With Clay's support, White's motion to be excused from voting was passed in the face of Grundy's opposition. *Ibid.*, p. 19. Van Buren thought that in this there was evidence of a growing friendship between Clay and White. Van Buren *Autobiography*,

taken from White in order to prevent a loss of his availability as an opposition candidate in the South through animosity aroused by a distribution of committee appointments. White, however, had not left the Democratic party, and in November had a conversation with Jackson which left the President confident of his loyalty.⁷⁹ Moreover, the opposition had not yet reconciled itself to the necessity of running more than one presidential ticket in the next campaign.

On the date fixed for the election of the committees, Thursday, December 12, Felix Grundy of Tennessee moved that action be delayed until the following Monday in order to wait for the arrival of three or four absentees.⁸⁰ This was obviously a Democratic maneuver to bring the party in the Senate to its full strength on this crucial test. Determined that the committees should be named while he was in command of a safe majority, Clay opposed the motion on the ground that the Senate was as complete as it ever would be. Definite evidence of Webster's independence came to light when he supported this

p 675. Clay evidently had a political object in mind in making this move, for upon his own initiative four years later the new rule was discarded, and the appointment of the committees was again placed in the hands of the president *pro tempore*. *Congressional Globe*, 25 Congress, I Session, p. 14.

⁷⁹ Andrew Jackson to Van Buren, Washington, November 16, 1833. Van Buren MSS.

⁸⁰ *Congressional Globe*, 23 Congress, 1 Session, p. 23. This motion, according to Van Buren, was the result of instructions from Jackson to delay action until the arrival of Van Buren December 15. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 677, 678.

motion and when, in explanation of his position, he said that he had in fact voted for Sprague's motion with great reluctance. When the final vote was taken, with his friends six of whom were from the New England states, he joined forces with the administration. His desertion of the opposition caused the passage of Grundy's motion by a vote of twenty-three to nineteen,⁸¹ thus delaying action as the Democrats had desired until the sixteenth. It was therefore by no means certain that the control of the committees would be in the hands of Clay and his friends if this defection should be repeated. Clay was well aware of this possibility for he wrote post-haste from the Senate chamber to John M. Clayton, a National Republican Senator from Delaware:

Until today, we have gone on swimmingly in the Senate. On Tuesday last this day was assigned to proceed to the appointment of the committees by the Senate itself. We came prepared . . . to carry them, if all proved faithful. To my surprise a motion was made by Mr. Grundy and supported by *Mr. Webster* to postpone the appointment until Monday next and it was carried. If you are here, I believe we shall be safe, even if there be defection. For God's sake then come to us. And do not let anything keep you away.⁸²

The "Spy in Washington" wrote the next day that Clay had been exceedingly angered by the

⁸¹ Only one member from a New England state, Sprague, voted with Clay. *Congressional Globe*, 23 Congress, 1 Session, p. 23.

⁸² Clay to Clayton, Senate Chamber, December 12, 1833. Clayton MSS. Library of Congress. Clay told Van Buren in 1849 that he had on this occasion for the first time seriously doubted Webster's loyalty to the party. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 671.

delay in the selection of the committees and that his plans for their composition, though undoubtedly arranged in detail, might not succeed.⁸³

The danger that Webster's intransigent attitude would be continued was averted by his failure to arrange satisfactory terms with the administration. According to Van Buren, the question of accepting Webster's coöperation was canvassed at a conference on December 15 between Jackson, Grundy, and himself.⁸⁴ After stressing the importance of controlling the finance committee, Grundy asserted that arrangements could be made to secure Webster's support in the Senate elections.⁸⁵ Jackson is reported to have then turned to Van Buren for his opinion. If his explanation is trustworthy, he urged Jackson not to accept Webster's aid for the reason that it would be impossible to coöperate with him without arousing "in the then excited state of public feeling . . . the suspicion of being disposed to favor such a coalition. . . ." The administration's strength was founded upon the

⁸³ *Albany Argus*, December 21, 1833.

⁸⁴ Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 677-679. A search of the Jackson, Van Buren, and Webster papers in the Library of Congress and of their published correspondence failed to reveal corroborative evidence of this meeting. Van Buren's detailed account, however, is sufficient proof that it took place.

⁸⁵ Ten days later Grundy told Adams that he was not disposed to defend the administration against Clay's resolutions censuring the President. Adams explained this coolness by reference to the favor which Jackson had shown to John H. Eaton, his opponent, in the Tennessee senatorial election. Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 60.

conviction that Jackson was unalterably opposed to the Bank, while Webster "was regarded by all sides as one of its most unscrupulous supporters. . . ." Jackson thought this advice was good and accordingly urged Grundy to drop the subject.

The failure of this negotiation resulted in the return of Webster and his friends to the opposition when, on December 16, the committees were chosen.⁸⁶ Clay, perhaps, was not informed before the first vote was taken that Webster had made this decision. It was noted by the correspondent of the *Albany Argus* that he betrayed great excitement at this time.

Mr. Clay began to assume a kind of playfulness and indifference among the senators. It was an evident effort to seem to relieve himself of the embarrassment he labored under; as a person sometimes laughs to cover a confusion of ideas. He overacted. His conduct was unusual and was observed by many. His attempts to conceal his emotion were the means of exposing them the more to public view.⁸⁷

It was soon observed by Democratic and opposition newspapers alike that neither Clay nor Calhoun was chairman of a committee and that Webster was chairman of the finance committee. The *Intelligencer* thought that these things would puzzle the uninitiated, but in its opinion the opposition's plans had been successful.⁸⁸ It

⁸⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 23 Congress, 1 Session, p. 33.

⁸⁷ *Albany Argus*, December 23, 1833. The report was written, however, on the day that the vote was taken, December 16.

⁸⁸ *National Intelligencer*, December 19, 1833.

was suggested by the *New York American* that the selection of William Wilkins, a tariff Democrat, as chairman of the committee on foreign affairs and of Felix Grundy in the place of Clayton as the chief of the post-office committee were further evidence of skilful maneuvers on the part of the opposition.⁸⁹ The "Spy in Washington" reported that Clay and Calhoun had both asked that they should not be given the chairmanship of any committee.⁹⁰ Democratic newspapers interpreted their absence from important places as evidence of a defeat. The *Pennsylvanian* believed that the administration had checked Clay's plan to take charge of some of the committees.⁹¹ The Washington correspondent of the *New York Journal of Commerce* thought that the opposition's plan had been nullified by the absence of harmony between the northern and southern wings.⁹² The *Albany Argus* was more accurately informed when it represented the formation of the committees "as the perfect drill of the coalition."⁹³ The multiplicity of newspaper speculations upon this subject testifies to a general appreciation of its importance; happily it is unnecessary to sift them carefully for the key to the Senate elections. Clay wrote the same day they were held:

⁸⁹ *New York American*, December 19, 1833.

⁹⁰ *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, December 20, 1833.

⁹¹ *Pennsylvanian*, December 19, 20, 1833.

⁹² *Albany Argus*, December 21, 1833.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, December 23, 1833.

We were highly gratified today in the Senate. We carried the appointment of every chairman of the committees as we wished; and as far as we have proceeded, every member of the several committees with one unimportant exception.⁹⁴

It was good politics from Clay's point of view to place Webster at the head of the finance committee, even if he had known that the negotiations between Webster and the administration had failed.⁹⁵ In that position, he would be compelled in dealing with the question of the deposits to take a definite stand. His association with Biddle and the Bank made probable his return to the opposition.⁹⁶ There is evidence in Webster's letters that the possibility of using his strategic position as a means of securing concessions for the Bank from the administration was a factor in his calculations at this time.

From various quarters pressure was brought to bear to maintain the union between Webster and the opposition achieved in the elections of the Senate committees. The *Baltimore Patriot* denied that there was any foundation for the current rumor of a break between Clay and Webster and protested against the publicity given to this

⁹⁴ Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, December 16, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 375.

⁹⁵ In 1849 Clay told Van Buren that his account of the meeting between Grundy, Jackson, and himself explained to him for the first time the reasons for the defeat of the plans which he knew Webster had arranged. Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 672, 673.

⁹⁶ Webster had suggested that Biddle submit the question of the removal of the deposits to Congress. Webster to Biddle, Boston, October 29, 1833. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 216, 217.

rumor.⁹⁷ The *National Gazette*, with the interests of the Bank in mind, wrote two days after the election that there was no reason to doubt the continuance of good relations between Webster and Clay:

Seeing the republican system itself and other vital public interests assailed by the executive branch of the government, he will, we presume, exert all his energies to defend or rescue them, glad to find such political leaders as Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun engaged in the same noble and pressing cause.⁹⁸

Before the removal was ordered, Biddle was ready to sacrifice the unity of the opposition if by that means Jackson's hostility could be moderated; but his influence, after the deposits had been removed, was directed to the maintenance and strengthening of the opposition. Webster had a long conversation with him while on his way to Washington in the course of which the political situation was probably canvassed.⁹⁹ Webster's

⁹⁷ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, December 24, 1833.

⁹⁸ *National Gazette and Literary Advertiser*, December 18, 1833.

⁹⁹ Webster to Biddle, New York, November 27, 1833. Biddle MSS. If Van Buren's suggestion is correct, Webster was told in the course of this conversation that Clay would be the leader of the Bank's forces during the approaching session and that this information and his own political ambitions prepared him for "an act of strong mark, the least effect of which would be to cripple if not altogether neutralize Mr. Clay's promised leadership by securing a complete umpirage over the action of the standing committees of the Senate." Van Buren, *Autobiography*, pp. 663, 664. That Webster's relations with the Bank at this time were not as close as they had been, is evident from the fact that he found it necessary, December 21, 1833, to apply for a renewal of his retainer's fee. Webster to Biddle, Washington, December 21, 1833. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 218. He assured

future course of action in regard to his relations with Clay was discussed, it may be inferred, but it is improbable that a definite engagement was made. Since Biddle's interest in the premises had changed, Webster would scarcely confide to him his hopes for a continued coöperation with Jackson. It is clear, however, that Biddle tried to keep Webster in line with the opposition, and he criticised his former agent in his negotiations with Jackson for his desertion, December 12, to the administration. Three days after the committees had been chosen Webster wrote to Biddle:

I am much obliged to you for your sermon, and will hope to profit by it. I mean to keep extremely cool myself, but I fear the temperature of others will rise, higher and higher. At present, there is no coolness whatever, between those whom you would expect to see acting together. Some little difficulties were found, in arranging the committees, but they were settled by mutual and friendly arrangements.¹⁰⁰

When the administration rejected a possible understanding with Webster, the inevitable result was to drive him back into his former political association with Clay and his friends. He was

Biddle in a letter accompanying his formal application that he had no intention of identifying himself in a cause against the Bank, that the enclosed note was intended merely to arouse the board of trustees to action. Webster to Biddle, Washington, December 21, 1833. Biddle MSS. Having failed in his attempt to arrange favorable terms for the Bank with Jackson through the instrumentality of Webster, Biddle with good reason asked Clay to lead the opposition on the question of the deposits.

¹⁰⁰ Webster to Biddle, Washington, December 19, 1833. Biddle MSS.

still, however, in a most sensitive mood, as Biddle was informed in the last days of the year by his representative in Washington:

I have seen Mr. Webster three times. At first, I was exceedingly alarmed at the ground he took. I found out subsequently that he considered himself deeply compromised by Mr. Clay's premature movement. He even told me that at one time he had determined to send back the memorial and request the Bank to get some one else to present it. I entered at large on the subject, told him of the public anxiety and dependence upon him—particularly of yourself and your friends.¹⁰¹

The political advantages of continuing to support the administration were brought to Webster's attention by a Pennsylvania Democrat. The party in that state had appreciated his policy on the nullification question, and Van Buren's influence there was not so strong that it might not be overcome by subsequent events. Webster was told that the "discontented part of the Jackson party in our State are looking up to you, that they are watching your course this winter with the utmost anxiety."¹⁰²

For a time Webster's friends advised that a neutral policy should be followed rather than one of complete surrender to the opposition. Stephen White wrote in December that "the mad

¹⁰¹ J. Q. Watmough to Biddle, Washington, December 30, 1833. *Ibid.* Webster's displeasure, mentioned in this letter, was aroused by the resolutions introduced by Clay, December 26, 1833, censuring the President.

¹⁰² N. W. Conrad to Webster, Philadelphia, December 17, 1833. Webster MSS.

pranks of old Jackson under the influences of Cabinet impulses and of his natural recklessness" had placed Webster in a difficult position. However, it was desirable that he should not be committed upon important issues to either party. "The Jackson people here, the best class of them I mean, lament deeply the course taken by the General as tending to drive into opposition those whose talents and influence would have been a tower of strength to the Administration."¹⁰³ Later, Webster was informed from the same source that a portion of the Democratic party in Boston had expressed "a strong desire that you may be able to maintain your neutrality," although they were aware that the removal of the deposits in spite of his reluctance might force him into opposition.¹⁰⁴ Even White soon became convinced that the administration's attitude left Webster no choice short of a close union with Clay. This decision was necessary in spite of the fact that

. . . your resolution had been made up not to arouse if possible, in the course you should adopt in the Senate, any opposition on mere party or local grounds to the measures of the administration: that the opinions and measures of the nullifiers were of so dangerous and mon-

¹⁰³ White to Webster, Boston, December 27, 1833. Van Tyne, Webster Transcripts. Webster's friends in Massachusetts resented keenly Clay's association with Calhoun. White wrote in this letter: "Mr. C. must and will commit himself ere long. He cannot touch pitch without being defiled and the moment the union between himself and Calhoun is more distinctly seen your friends will move here in solid column."

¹⁰⁴ White to Webster, Boston, December 30, 1833. *Ibid.*

strous a character that the preservation of the union and the maintenance of the legitimate powers of the general government were with you paramount objects . . . moderation and a conciliatory course would have secured the acquiescence if not the support of many powerful and patriotic minds.¹⁰⁵

When the speculation aroused by the formation and composition of the Senate committees was exhausted, opposition newspapers judiciously avoided all reference to Webster's past or present relations with the administration. The *Telegraph*, however, was distinctly interested in a disposition to conciliate him on the part of the Democratic press. It was probably mistaken in pointing to this as the motive when the *New Hampshire Patriot* for a time was unexpectedly moderate in its references to Webster.¹⁰⁶ As evidence of the Democratic point of view, the *New York Standard* was quoted to the effect that Webster would not act with Clay and Calhoun. "An independent position in which he can control a majority of the Senate, is so easy of attainment and so much more honorable than to follow the lead of two disappointed and desperate politicians that I think he will not fail to seize upon it."¹⁰⁷ Green was of course far from the mark when he asserted that Van Buren was willing to reverse the administration's policy in removing the deposits in order to conciliate Webster.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ White to Webster, Boston, January 9, 1834. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *United States Telegraph*, December 27, 1833.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, December 28, 1833.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, December 30, 1833.

The hostile report on the removal presented in the Senate by Webster's committee marked the definite end of a possible realignment of parties. Webster henceforth was in complete agreement with the opposition upon the currency question, and Webster's old political associates were thus reassured of his loyalty to the party. The reactions of many, both North and South, were doubtless similar to those expressed by a correspondent of Willie P. Mangum. Webster's report had demonstrated his political honesty as beyond suspicion.

If Mr. Webster could have been induced to forget what was due his country here was ample opportunity to have sold himself with advantage. Pressed as the administration is, beset on all sides by the ablest and most eloquent men of the nation, driven to depend on talent of an inferior grade, and for safety, to the ignorance and blind passions of the mob, what a triumph it would have been to have enlisted the Briarius of the North in its cause, what office could or would have been denied, and I think I have heard a gentleman not very far from the honorable Senator who is now reading this, hint that such things might be.¹⁰⁹

According to the Washington correspondent of the *New York Daily Advertiser*, Webster had been loyal to his party in the face of the manifest

¹⁰⁹ F. Nash to W. P. Mangum, Hillsboro, February 21, 1834. Mangum MSS. Mangum was a member of the finance committee under Webster. The sectional affiliations of the members of this committee are interesting. New England was represented by Webster, the West by Ewing of Ohio, the South by Mangum of North Carolina. The opposition was learning by experience that resistance to the financial policy of the administration was the most effective issue upon which to unite its heterogeneous members.

anxiety of the administration to retain him. "He might have had anything and everything the party could bestow, if he had laid the Senate at the feet of the President. Mr. Van Buren would have cut off his mustaches . . . if that would have moved him."¹¹⁰ Webster explained his policy to the Senate in the spring of 1834.

I ardently hoped that nothing might occur to place me . . . in an attitude of opposition. In all respects, and in every way, it would have been far more agreeable to have found nothing in the measures of the administration which I could not cheerfully support. The present occasion of difference has not been sought or made by me. It is thrust upon me, in opposition to strong opinions and wishes, on my part not concealed. The interference with the public deposits dispelled all hope of continued concurrence with the administration; and was a measure so uncalled for, so unnecessary, and, in my judgment, so illegal and indefensible, that, with whatever reluctance it might be opposed, opposition was unavoidable.¹¹¹

Nothing was said or perhaps could have been said in regard to his negotiations with the administration.

In view of the exigencies of practical politics the influences working toward a realignment of parties upon the "union" issue in 1833 could not be permanently successful. There was first and always the sharp contrast between the training and traditions of Webster and Jackson; only a serious crisis, like the nullification movement, was

¹¹⁰ *New York Daily Advertiser*, January 24, 1834.

¹¹¹ *Mr. Webster's Speech on the President's Protest, Senate, May 7, 1834*. Pamphlet. Library of Congress.

able momentarily to bring them together. In order to make this temporary agreement a permanent understanding it was necessary that the administration reverse its policy towards the Bank. This the leaders of the Democratic party would never do. The attack upon the Bank as a principle of political strategy was not an experiment to be readily discarded. Its effectiveness had been so thoroughly demonstrated by the results of the preceding campaign that the politicians were wedded to it. Open acceptance of the "union" issue would have been inconsistent with the state rights traditions of the larger number of Jackson's friends and would have driven many, especially in the South, into opposition. It was equally undesirable from the point of view of the opposition's leaders, since nullification had brought Calhoun as a welcome ally. Politicians in both camps were therefore concerned with maintaining the distinctions between parties as they had existed in the last campaign.

The nullification crisis was not sufficiently serious nor did it last long enough to overcome the inertia of politicians. The movement for southern rights, of which it was an early episode, had not made sufficient progress at this time to convince more than a few that there was a real danger to the preservation of the union. At no time was there more than a small minority even in the South that supported South Carolina in

its extreme theories. Nullification had lost its importance as a national issue by the fall of 1833; politics and politicians thereupon promptly dropped the union issue, to Webster's apparent regret, and raised again less embarrassing questions. Public interest thus became centered upon the currency question upon which Webster and Jackson had no basis of agreement.

The crisis in party relations of 1833 had important consequences upon the future of the National Republican party. Its organization had been disrupted, and the divisions between Clay and Webster made improbable a renewal of friendly coöperation. Discredited by his defeat in 1832, by his apparent abandonment of the protective tariff, and by his association with Calhoun, Clay was succeeded by Webster as the logical candidate of the nationalists. His support of the proclamation and the force bill gave Webster additional strength in the North, but he was thereby eliminated as the leader of the opposition in the South. The immediate origins of the divisions within the Whig party during the campaign of 1836 are therefore to be found in the maneuvers and counter-maneuvers of 1833.

CHAPTER IV

PARTY STRATEGY AND NEW LEADERSHIP

THE National Republican party was thoroughly discredited at the end of 1833. Its leader and its principles had been rejected in the preceding election, and nullification had sown the seeds of suspicion between Webster's friends and those who welcomed the alliance with Calhoun. In August, 1833, Niles predicted the use of "new rules of action,"¹ and in November Adams commented upon the disintegration of parties.² The ground was therefore cleared for a new organization, but Webster's dreams of using this opportunity for the organization of a party in open support of nationalist ideas came to nothing in a maze of political intrigues. Political necessities, as in the campaign of 1832, required a coalition, and expediency suggested the adoption of a new name that would be free of the National Republican heritage of defeat. The Whig party was born in the spring of 1834 under circumstances that promised a successful future. It was not, however, until after the results of the election of

¹ *Niles' Register*, XLV. 1.

² Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 35.

1836 had been studied that the necessary step was taken to recognize leaders who had the ability and the willingness to appeal to the sources from which the Democrats drew their strength.

The removal of the deposits and the Bank's systematic restriction of its loans for the purpose of creating discontent against the administration³ encouraged the opposition in a new effort at organization. Fluctuation in the value of the currency and difficulties in the making of loans, Webster was told, argued so strongly in the interest of a national bank that "a fearful revolution of opinion against General Jackson . . . might be successfully organized and perhaps the time has come which may shake even his baleful popularity and produce a radical change in the relation of parties."⁴ New England experienced the full evils of the economic depression. "In this land of snows," so reads a letter from Connecticut to Mangum, where the people are "cool, calculating and serious," great activity was taking place in organizing the opposition and in publishing campaign material.⁵ Word came to Webster from central New York that the distress caused by the removal was no "humbug," and that serious changes were taking place in public opinion,

³ This topic is discussed in detail in Catterall, *Second Bank*, pp. 314-332.

⁴ Stephen White to Webster, Boston, December 30, 1833. Van Tyne, Webster Transcripts.

⁵ E. H. Burritt to Mangum, New Britain, March 20, 1834. Mangum MSS.

"especially among mercantile men. The universal hurrah for Jackson has ceased, and men begin to look with deep discontent at the present alarming condition of the country."⁶ Niles noted that prices and wages were falling, that interest rates mounted to twelve and eighteen percent, and that unemployment was increasing.⁷ Much of the depression, however, was due to temporary causes. As early as December, 1833, Philip Hone, a New York merchant, attributed the increasing difficulties, in part, to the removal but also to the activities of speculators, who were buying stocks to the value of millions for future delivery on the prospect of a general decline in prices. He pointed to the compromise tariff as another cause of depression.⁸ Biddle was assured by Samuel Jaudon, the Bank's cashier and his trusted adviser, that the tariff was largely responsible.⁹ Biddle was determined to make good use of prevailing conditions. He wrote to the president of the branch at Boston that Democrats could be persuaded to abandon the administration only by "the actual conviction of the existing distress of the community. Nothing but evidence of suffering

⁶ J. H. Ostrom to Webster, Utica, January 21, 1834. Webster MSS.

⁷ Catterall, *Second Bank*, p. 326.

⁸ *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (Bayard Tuckerman ed., N. Y., 1889), I. 85.

⁹ "We know that a great part of the present pressure arises from the change in the system of duties, and other causes that are temporary." Jaudon to Biddle, March 9, 1834. Catterall, *Second Bank*, p. 298.

. . . will produce any effect in Congress." If the Bank should be induced "by too great a sensitiveness" to relax its policy of restriction, "the relief will itself be cited as evidence that the measures of the government are not injurious or oppressive, and the Bank will inevitably be prostrated."¹⁰

However artificial the depression may have been, its effects were real, and the city of New York felt them keenly. Hone wrote that the year 1833 had ended disastrously, that "personal property has no fixed value, and *sauve qui peut* is the maxim of the day."¹¹ Conditions continued unfavorable through the spring of 1834 and thus aroused hope that the opposition would make a good showing in the April municipal election. Ordinarily of merely local importance, the charter election of this year was regarded as an event of national significance, since it was the first test of public opinion after the beginning of the depression. Early in March Clay told Hone that the opposition's one hope was in the New York and Pennsylvania elections, for success there would encourage the revolt of a sufficient number of Jackson men in Congress to overthrow the Democratic control of legislation.¹² Adams¹³ and

¹⁰ Biddle to William Appleton, January 27, 1834. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 219-220.

¹¹ Hone, *Diary*, I. 86.

¹² *Ibid.*, I. 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I. 94.

Webster¹⁴ were of the same opinion. Since it was regarded by party leaders as a first step in a new campaign against Jackson, wide interest was shown in the electioneering and in the results of the New York election. The *Intelligencer* and *Niles* commented upon the intensely partisan activities there. City journals, it was said, teemed with accounts of public meetings. Carters, landlords, seamen, stone cutters, tailors met for the purpose of denouncing the administration. Men of all professions and from every interest entered the contest.¹⁵ Committees were organized to protect party interests at the polls, and it was recommended that "friends of a restoration close their stores and workshops that they might attend the business of the elections."¹⁶ The Democrats elected their candidate for mayor by a small margin, but they lost control of the Council.¹⁷ The result was hailed everywhere as a significant success.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I. 98.

¹⁵ *National Intelligencer*, April 5, 1834. Cf. *New York Daily Advertiser*, March 31, April 1, 1834.

¹⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLVI. 82.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, XLVI. 115. Earlier Niles had reported that the parties seemed to be engaged in a death struggle: "the public officers and all their dependents, with the friends of general and state governments on the one side—and the merchants and traders on the other. Business of all sorts was nearly suspended—at 12 M. the flag of the union was hoisted each day on the exchange, the building was then deserted and the stores in all parts of the city generally closed, that every man might go to the polls." *Ibid.*, XLVI. pp. 100, 101.

¹⁸ According to Hone, Whig newspapers reported enthusiastic celebrations, illuminations, the firing of cannons on the arrival of the news in Philadelphia, Albany, Buffalo, and Baltimore. Hone, *Diary*, I. 103.

Members of the opposition first called themselves Whigs in the course of this exciting local election. Political parties in the Jacksonian period rarely made a purposive search for their names,¹⁹ and the name Whig has been traced to a variety of sources. Most recently, Professor Dixon R. Fox credits its first use to Colonel Webb, editor of the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, at the suggestion of Philip Hone.²⁰ Other historians have discovered it in the campaign of 1832 in Maine,²¹ Pennsylvania,²² and South Carolina.²³ A contemporary observer credits it to Joseph Duane, a writer on the staff of the *Star Spangled Banner* in February 1834.²⁴ It appears from the first day of the election in the diary of Philip Hone, an active member of the party, but the *New York Daily Advertiser* used it only once in its reports of the campaign and election.²⁵ The number of these explanations, supported in each case by credible evidence, casts doubt upon any as the exclusive truth, and the general acceptance

¹⁹ The use of party names during the campaign of 1832 is discussed in Gammon, *Campaign of 1832*, pp. 155-162.

²⁰ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, p. 367. Cf. Barnes, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, p. 48.

²¹ L. C. Hatch, *History of Maine* (1919), I. 210.

²² Mary G. Bartlett, *The Chief Phases of Pennsylvania Politics in the Jacksonian Period* (Allentown, 1919), p. 77. The value of Miss Bartlett's monograph in this and other instances is lessened by the absence of exact citations.

²³ Cole, *Whig Party in the South*, p. 18.

²⁴ Nathan Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, I. 362.

²⁵ *New York Daily Advertiser*, April 7, 1834.

of the name in the summer of 1834 may be attributed to a common appreciation of its political merits. It fixed attention upon opposition to Jackson rather than upon political principles as the reason for the party's existence. Moreover, its associations with the struggle against the power of the British Crown and with the cause of the Revolutionary patriots had a sentimental attraction for men who were smarting under what they alleged to be an unconstitutional exercise of the president's powers. The enthusiasm with which the new campaign began was evident in the high ground taken by the party. Quite in keeping with its alleged mission as the defender of the constitution, a miniature frigate, thus christened, was hauled through the streets of New York during the election²⁶ and was later taken to Philadelphia.²⁷ As evidence of their patriotic inclinations, business men ordered flags to be hoisted above the Exchange.²⁸

The *Intelligencer* forthwith interpreted the Whig success in the city as a promise of a more important victory in the state election of November.²⁹ Local elections in Albany, Syracuse, Auburn, Troy, and New Brunswick gave additional encouragement. It seemed to Niles that a real change had taken place "in the political opinions

²⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLVI. 116.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XLVI. 130.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, XLVI. 100, 101.

²⁹ *National Intelligencer*, April 14, 1834.

of the people of this state, or there is new zeal to give them effect.”³⁰ A movement of great significance was taking place, he believed, and its momentum was being “hourly increased by the new difficulties in business and the greatly increased number of persons out of employment.”³¹

Undue confidence, however, was placed in the political results of the depression. One of the most important causes of the depression was removed when the Bank abandoned its policy of restriction in July,³² and as the state banks had profited by federal deposits the administration thereby gained their support.³³ Democrats did not fail to press home the charge that the national bank was responsible for the depression.³⁴ These circumstances, Hone declared in October, required that Whig nominations should be made with exclusive regard to the political strength of the candidates. “All personal feelings and predilections must be sacrificed for the success of our party,” and “we must . . . without committing ourselves to unworthy persons, run only such as will obtain the most votes.”³⁵ The party

³⁰ *Niles' Register*, XLVI. 190.

³¹ *Ibid.*, XLVI. 130.

³² Catterall, *Second Bank*, pp. 327, 328.

³³ Hammond, *Political History of New York*, II. 435.

³⁴ These charges were summarized in an address prepared by the New York State Democratic Convention in September 1834. *Niles' Register*, XLVII. 63.

³⁵ Hone, *Diary*, I. 114, 115. Whig organization, he admitted, could not compare with that of their opponents. “Our folks are not so well drilled . . . they will think for themselves, not like them go straight forward right or wrong as they are bidden.”

in New York suffered from the complaint of divided leadership that was chronic in its national organization, and Seward's nomination was the result of a secret bargain among a few politicians.³⁶ Nevertheless, no effort was spared to elect him in order to make an auspicious beginning in the national campaign. Niles reported that "such doings as are now happening in New York never happened before."³⁷ On the eve of the election, he declared that the result would be the turning point in national politics, for it would "decide whether the principles of General Jackson are approved and ratified by the people, and whether Mr. Van Buren is to be his successor."³⁸

The elation of the Whigs in the spring and summer proved premature. In Pennsylvania the party lost two seats in Congress which the National Republicans had controlled.³⁹ Seward's defeat was foreshadowed by that of James Findlay in Ohio, where the Democratic candidate for governor was elected.⁴⁰ Optimism was further chilled by a defeat in New Jersey,⁴¹ which was soon followed by a two to one vote for the Democratic candidate, William L. Marcy, in the New York election.⁴² Horace Greeley attributed

³⁶ Seward, *Autobiography*, pp. 156, 157.

³⁷ *Niles' Register*, XLVII. 69.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, XLVII. 116.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, XLVII. 118.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, XLVII. 138.

⁴¹ Hone, *Diary*, I, 113.

⁴² *Niles' Register*, XXLVII. 116.

Seward's defeat to a return of prosperity,⁴³ and this opinion was also expressed by Michel Chevalier, a French economist then in this country on an official mission:

Le retablisement des affaires industrielles a tourné . . . au désavantage de l'Opposition . . . Le commerce est prospère maintenant; la campagne d'automne a été excellent; tout porte à penser que celle du printemps prochain ne sera pas moins avantageuse.⁴⁴

Events had proved that Democratic strength was too solidly established to be overthrown as easily as the Whigs, deceived by their hopes, had anticipated.

While the prospects for success in the national campaign had been promising in the spring of 1834, the situation was reversed after the series of failures in local and state elections of the summer and fall. In addition, there was a discouraging absence of principles, if we except a disposition to oppose Van Buren. Sectional divergences inherited from the National Republican party made union in support of a single candidate improbable. New England Whigs of nationalist predilections named Webster as their candidate; the southern wing found a leader in Judge White,⁴⁵ a recent recruit from Democratic

⁴³ Horace Greeley, *Recollections of an Active Life* (N. Y., 1873), p. 112.

⁴⁴ Michel Chevalier, *Lettres sur l'Amerique du Nord* (Bruxelles, 1837), pp. 269, 270.

⁴⁵ Cole, *Whig Party in the South*, pp. 38 ff.

ranks; while the party in the west hesitated between William H. Harrison and Clay. All were unavailable for the leadership of a united party. Webster and White could hope for little support outside of their sections. Clay's relations with Calhoun and his responsibility for the compromise tariff made him unacceptable to the party in New England, and few anywhere had confidence in him as a candidate. Oran Follett informed him that he had been abandoned as a candidate.

I feel the force of what I say, and no one regrets the necessity more than I do, that compels me to say you are not the man on whom the friends of the country can rely for the canvass of 1836. This is the secret conviction of the whole National Republican party, with perhaps a few exceptions.⁴⁶

The lure of the presidency was too strong for Clay to abandon hope of a nomination, but in the summer of 1833 he declared his reluctance to accept one without assurance of certain success.⁴⁷ Webster's return to the opposition⁴⁸ apparently encouraged him, for he immediately sounded a rallying cry for a new attack upon the administration.⁴⁹ The political situation remaining un-

⁴⁶ Follett to Clay, January 10, 1833. Follett Papers, I. 76.

⁴⁷ Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, May 30, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 362. Cf. E. Thomas to McLean, Cincinnati, August 31, 1833. McLean MSS.

⁴⁸ See the preceding chapter for a discussion of this topic.

⁴⁹ "I mean myself to open and push a vigorous campaign. It is the campaign of 1777. I want aid—all the aid that can be given." Clay to Brooke, Washington, December 16, 1833. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 375.

favorable, by the summer of 1835 he became convinced that there was no possibility for a turn in public sentiment in his favor.⁵⁰ Elisha Whittlesey, writing to McLean in May 1833, attributed Clay's loss of strength to the compromise tariff which had made him "exceedingly unpopular in all manufacturing districts."⁵¹ According to the *New York Advertiser*, a staunch opponent of Jackson and a firm advocate of protection, Clay was considered by "many of his former friends as having in some measure abandoned them, and their interests, as well as his own principles." Convinced that he must give up his own presidential ambitions, Clay turned to a consideration of the merits of the other candidates. Webster would have no chance, he thought, although his qualifications were admittedly superior.⁵² By September, 1835, he had decided that Harrison was the most available candidate.⁵³ This decision aroused suspicion that Clay intended to dominate Harrison's administration in the event of his election. A correspondent of McLean declared: "If he cannot be himself elected he would prefer one he could control as a father his child—if not a Louisianan his

⁵⁰ Clay to (?), July 14, 1835. *Ibid.*, 393.

⁵¹ Whittlesey to McLean, Canfield, Ohio, May 3, 1833. McLean MSS.

⁵² *New York Advertiser*, July 15, 1835.

⁵³ Clay to (?), July 14, 1835. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 394.

slave.”⁵⁴ To what extent Clay aided Harrison’s campaign must, in the absence of information, remain uncertain, but his interest in Harrison did not prevent a revival of his own ambitions in the campaign of 1840.

The elimination of Clay opened the field to other candidates, and McLean promptly appeared again with his plan of placing himself at the head of a fusion party. In December, 1833, he wrote to the postmaster of New York that in his opinion both parties in the West would support him. He feared that “all the discipline of the party will be brought to bear against me, and the entire patronage of the federal government.”⁵⁵ As in the campaign of 1832, he proposed to appeal to the dissatisfied members of both parties. To this end, the prospectus of a new journal with the significant name, *The Moderator*, appeared in the columns of the *Washington Globe*. Election of any one of the candidates then in the field would bring dissension and perhaps disunion to the country. “It will therefore be both expedient and necessary that these candidates yield their claims to those of one enjoying the general confidence of the people.”⁵⁶ That McLean was to be this highly desirable candidate does not appear in

⁵⁴ George Kesling to McLean, Lebanon, Ohio, August 10, 1835. McLean MSS.

⁵⁵ McLean to S. L. Gouverneur, Richland, Ohio, December 10, 1832. Gouverneur MSS.

⁵⁶ This announcement is signed by W. R. Collier, who is otherwise unknown to fame. *Washington Globe*, June 28, 1833.

the text of this announcement, but it is certain that his name was in the writer's mind.⁵⁷ His plan of appealing to members of both parties was commended by friendly politicians. Arrangements had been made, Whittlesey informed him, for assemblies of Democrats from Pennsylvania and Ohio in order to decide upon the best way of bringing his name before the public.⁵⁸ According to Albert H. Tracy, an Anti-Masonic leader in New York, only McLean could unite all elements of the opposition, and his nomination should be made by men who were least objectionable to the Democrats.⁵⁹ Thaddeus Stevens, at this time an Anti-Masonic politician in Pennsylvania, advised that he should first be nominated by his Democratic friends.⁶⁰ For a year McLean continued to count upon a fusion of the two parties. Early in February, 1834, he declared that his friends had refused to withdraw his name because "they know that a large portion of the Jackson party, if not a majority of them, are willing to sustain me, and that this force united with the National Republicans would make its result certain." However, he was far from confident of the loyalty of his political friends in the opposition. "My impression is, that they wish to

⁵⁷ N. T. Simpson to McLean, Washington, June 21, 1833. McLean MSS.

⁵⁸ Whittlesey to McLean, Canfield, September 14, 1833. *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Tracy to McLean, New York, September 3, 1833.

⁶⁰ Richards to McLean, Harrisburg, January 18, 1834. *Ibid.*

use me, at least some of them, to break up the Jackson party in Ohio and Pennsylvania, in order to increase the prospects of Mr. Clay or Mr. Calhoun.”⁶¹ Unfortunately for his prospects, he declared himself as opposed in principle to a renewal of the Bank’s charter and thus alienated friends in the Whig party.⁶² In August, 1834, Whittlesey warned him that his Democratic admirers could not be relied upon. McLean’s criticism of the postal service had apparently been well received in Democratic circles, but if Barry’s loyalty to the administration should be put to the question “you have not a friend in the House who is a Jackson man that will not say aye, with a full voice, and look as if he meant it.”⁶³

The result of the Ohio state election in the fall of 1834, in which McLean had endorsed James Findlay, the Whig candidate,⁶⁴ was regarded as a test of McLean’s political strength. Success there, in Tracy’s opinion, not only would be a serious blow to Van Buren but would “go further than any single event to settle the question between you and every other candidate.” Should

⁶¹ McLean to S. T. Chapman, Washington, February 27, 1834. *Ibid.*

⁶² Thomas Corwin to McLean, May 20, 1834. *Ibid.*; Whittlesey to McLean, Washington, June 2, 1834. *Ibid.*; Charles Hammond to Thomas Ewing, Cincinnati, March 27, 1834. Ewing MSS. Library of Congress.

⁶³ Whittlesey to McLean, Canfield, August 14, 1834. McLean MSS.

⁶⁴ McLean to Findlay, Washington, February 7, 1834. Torrence Papers, I. *Quarterly Publications of the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society*, I. 81, 82.

the Democratic governor be reëlected, "it would go far to blast all our hopes in this State and would be irreparably injurious to your prospects throughout the country."⁶⁵ Findlay's defeat did not prevent a nomination of McLean by the state legislature,⁶⁶ but without the prestige of an initial success in his own state it was, of course, coldly received. In July, 1835, the *Intelligencer* pointed out his lack of support outside of Ohio, and, in any case, that the encouragement given to McLean was intended as a "mark of respect and confidence rather than a serious intention that he should leave his present position in the Supreme Court."⁶⁷ When it became clear that the Whigs contemplated a scheme to force the election into the House,—perhaps a timely opportunity to withdraw from a hopeless contest—, McLean refused to become involved and accordingly withdrew his name in August, 1835.⁶⁸

With this action McLean ceased to play a part in Whig politics during the Jacksonian period. Like those of his more notable rivals, his presidential aspirations were doubtless founded upon personal ambitions. Adams declared that he thought "of nothing but the Presidency by day and dreamed of nothing else at night."⁶⁹ Due to

⁶⁵ Tracy to McLean, Buffalo, May 28, 1834. McLean MSS.

⁶⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLVII. 138.

⁶⁷ *National Intelligencer*, July 11, 1835.

⁶⁸ McLean to Moses H. Kirby, Richland, August 31, 1835. McLean MSS.

⁶⁹ Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 587.

the scarcity of his own letters and other evidence, McLean's attitude toward party politics must remain obscure, but it is clear that his interest in partisan measures was distinctly less than that of other leaders. His point of view resembled that of Adams in that he refused to be completely identified with a particular party and clung to the ideal of a non-partisan administration. Seeking support wherever he could find it, he opened himself to criticism, which was perhaps not without foundation, as a scheming politician. Ready to accept the aid of the opposition, he was quite willing that Democratic leaders should believe that he was one of themselves. In February, 1833, in the course of a plea for Democratic aid in Pennsylvania, he declared: "Indeed, without the countenance and support of this party, I have never designed that they were at liberty to bring me forward. Since the commencement of my political life, I have acted with this party, and I do not believe that any other safe basis can be afforded for the federal constitution."⁷⁰

The nullification crisis failed to realize Webster's hopes of a new party in support of nationalist principles, but it helped to nominate him on this platform. He was convinced, according to Tracy, that the union issue would determine

⁷⁰ McLean to Ingham, Washington, February 4, 1833. Van Buren MSS. The presence of this letter in the Van Buren manuscripts suggests that McLean's position was of some interest to Democratic leaders.

the result of the next campaign, and Tracy was confident that this consideration would induce him to become a candidate.⁷¹ Early in January, 1835, he was nominated by a group of his admirers in the Massachusetts legislature,⁷² and an address was prepared citing his constitutional principles as the chief reason for his nomination.

It is impossible to reconcile all the differences of this wide land; but there is one question in which all parts of it have the same interest. Let that be made the rallying point of the Whigs. Let us be for the constitution, and the man who can best defend it.⁷³

It was clear to Webster that support of an exclusively nationalist character would scarcely meet the needs of a campaign. Believing that useful recruits could be found among the remnants of the Anti-Masonic party,⁷⁴ he seriously maneuvered for their aid.⁷⁵ The party maintained a shadowy existence in national politics,⁷⁶

⁷¹ Tracy to Weed, Buffalo, June 10, 1833. Barnes, *Memoirs of Weed*, p. 49.

⁷² *National Intelligencer*, January 26, 1835.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1836. Webster selected the following slogan for his campaign: "Our country, our country, and nothing but our country."

⁷⁴ Webster to Jeremiah Mason, Washington, February 1, 1835. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, p. 114.

⁷⁵ In order to show that he was acting in accordance with respectable precedents, Webster sought permission to publish Marshall's letters in which he had endorsed Anti-Masonry. Webster to Edward E. Marshall, Washington, February 6, 1836. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

⁷⁶ *National Intelligencer*, November 25, 1835. A make-shift convention met in the summer of 1836. The *New Yorker*, August 20, 1836.

while in local affairs it had a variety of experiences. It remained an active force in Pennsylvania as a result of local issues and of the personal influence of Thaddeus Stevens.⁷⁷ In New York⁷⁸ and Vermont⁷⁹ its members drifted into the Whig party, but in Massachusetts a division occurred, one part going into the Democratic ranks.⁸⁰ Webster had no objection in principle to an association with them. In November, 1835, the Anti-Masonic committee of Alleghany county, Pennsylvania, asked Webster to prepare a statement of his position with reference to the principles of that party.⁸¹ In reply he declared that they had his approval, as he understood them, and added that he had endorsed the Massachusetts statute against secret oaths.⁸² W. W. Irwin, a member of the committee, without showing it to his col-

⁷⁷ McCarthy, *Anti-Masonic Party*, p. 461.

⁷⁸ Hammond, *Political Parties in New York*, II. 439. Cf. Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 114, 115.

⁷⁹ McCarthy, *Anti-Masonic Party*, 514.

⁸⁰ Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 70, 71. Cf. *The New Yorker*, November 19, 1836. The Anti-Masonic party had drawn some of its members from the Democrats, and this element was suspicious of the efforts of Whigs to gain their support. Henry Dana Ward, a leading Anti-Mason in New York, declared that their interest was in votes not principles. Ward to E. Tilden, New Lebanon, January 9, 1835. Van Buren MSS. Adams thought Ward to be acting in Van Buren's interest. Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 170.

⁸¹ Harmar Denny to Webster, Pittsburg, November 11, 1835. Webster MSS. Webster had been in sympathy with the aims of Anti-Masonry since 1833. Included in a series of points prepared for use on his western tour was one condemning unlawful associations, secret oaths and all societies seeking to obtain advantages not enjoyed by other citizens. Van Tyne, *Webster Letters*, p. 183.

⁸² Webster to the Anti-Masonic Committee of Alleghany County, Boston, November 20, 1835. Webster MSS.

leagues, returned Webster's statement with a request that his views should be stated more forcefully.⁸³ The draft of Webster's letter shows that he then struck out the qualifying phrase and instead of an approval of the Massachusetts statute wrote: "It is my opinion that the future administration of all such oaths should be prohibited by law."⁸⁴ Even this statement was apparently not entirely satisfactory, for Webster again wrote to Irwin that he could not promise to appoint Anti-Masons exclusively, in the event of his election, although there could be no doubt as to his attitude.⁸⁵ His efforts, however, were fruitless, for the Anti-Masons at Harrisburg gave first choice to Harrison and the second to Francis Granger.⁸⁶ Webster was told that he was the personal choice of most delegates but that expediency forbade his nomination. "Ah, but he was a Federalist! Damning sin! Never to be forgiven! But he was opposed to the war!"⁸⁷

Webster was the choice of perhaps the most influential of the Whig newspapers. The *Boston Atlas*, the *New York American*, and the *National Intelligencer*, in so far as they supported a par-

⁸³ Irwin to Webster, Pittsburg, November 27, 1835. *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ The corrections were made in his letter of November 20.

⁸⁵ Webster to Irwin, Boston, November 30, 1835. *Webster's Writings* (National Edition), XVI. p. 260.

⁸⁶ *National Intelligencer*, December 19, 1835. This nomination was of little importance, since it was soon rejected by the Pennsylvania state committee. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1835.

⁸⁷ Charles Miner to Webster, Harrisburg, December 17, 1835. Webster MSS.

ticular candidate, endorsed him, but he lacked the qualities necessary to arouse enthusiasm.⁸⁸ It was generally believed that he had few contacts with the people.⁸⁹ His friends argued that his superior qualifications should be recognized by the support of a united party. The *Intelligencer* despaired of republican government if the charge were true that he was of a "too high order of intellect, of too pure a school of politics, ever to be chosen President of the United States."⁹⁰

The growing popularity of Harrison's candidacy aroused resentment among newspapers devoted to Webster. Consistent with their conservative character, they wished to maintain the standards for the presidency as they had existed before the advent of Jacksonian Democracy. The candidate of the Whig party, they declared, should have all of the qualifications given by experience and ability. The *Intelligencer* cautiously refrained from expressing openly an opinion as regards Harrison's merits, but its reactions were clearly revealed in the clippings it printed. The *Pittsburg Gazette* declared that his abilities were not of a high order and that his name had only recently been mentioned as a possible candidate.

⁸⁸ In March, 1836, the Massachusetts legislature however refused to withdraw his nomination until a more convincing case could be made against him. *National Intelligencer*, March 24, 1836.

⁸⁹ He found it necessary to deny the charge that had ever said, "Let Congress take care of the Rich, and the Rich will take care of the Poor." Webster to James Brooks, Boston, August 5, 1834. *Webster's Writings* (National Edition), XVI. 241, 242.

⁹⁰ *National Intelligencer*, March 24, 1836.

He would never have been considered had he not commanded at Tippecanoe. "The 'hero of Tippecanoe' figures as prominently as the 'hero of New Orleans' used to be in the Jackson papers."⁹¹ The *Pittsburg Advocate* refused to endorse a man of second rate ability.⁹¹ Whig success would depend, according to the *Philadelphia Gazette*, upon "Whig principles" and the "superiority of their candidate"; defeat would be certain in the event of Harrison's nomination, and it refused to aid the election of a "secondary man."⁹² In October the *Advocate* asserted again that its candidate was "Daniel Webster, not General or Colonel Webster" and that the shallow appeal of a military reputation was not needed to convince the people of the need for a change in the administration. Webster was "the great man of the country . . . we want no lesser lights—no stars of the second magnitude."⁹³ Harrison's nomination at various points in the West drew from "Massachusetts" a trenchant letter which affirmed the intention of Webster's friends to remain true to his principles rather than to support merely an available candidate. Men who were now urging Harrison's election, he declared, had formerly denied that Jackson's greater accomplishments and abilities merited the presidency. "If New Orleans in all its fame of truth, should

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, September 30, 1835.

⁹² *Ibid.*, October 24, 1835.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, October 28, 1835.

furnish no civic wreath to the victor, can Tippecanoe supply it?"⁹⁴ These objectors to Harrison were men who clung to the traditions of the Federalist and National Republican parties. They were opposed to meeting Van Buren with a candidate who had some of popular qualities of Jackson, and were equally willing, according to the *National Gazette*, to support Webster or Clay.

The friends of Mr. Webster will act, not with reference simply or mainly, to his personal interests, but also for the important end of obtaining a declaration in favor of a powerful and experienced captain of the civil order . . . in contradistinction to a vamped hero of the military species, nominated for his supposed popularity for military deeds, and who has fallen among the 'illustrious obscure and inert' during the whole time that Whig battles have been fought.⁹⁵

In September, 1833, Whittlesey wrote to Webster: "the National Republican party has deceived itself by consulting and taking counsel almost exclusively from those in the highest walks of life. The rank and file men however poll the votes."⁹⁶ This consideration, he thought, would be a strong point for McLean, but in fact it brought Harrison into the campaign. His nomination early in the spring of 1835 by a group of "Democratic Republicans" in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, assembled "without re-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, December 28, 1835.

⁹⁵ *National Gazette and Literary Register*, November 20, 1835.

⁹⁶ Whittlesey to Webster, Canfield, September 14, 1833. Webster MSS.

gard to former differences of opinion,"⁹⁷ had little immediate effect. His increasing popularity convinced the *Intelligencer* in September, however, that he had become a serious factor.⁹⁸ The *Cincinnati Gazette* was convinced that neither Webster nor McLean could be elected and that events showed Harrison to be the most promising candidate. "Harrison takes with the people—why then, shall not the politicians adhere to him . . . Mr. Webster cannot be elected President—Gen. Harrison may be elected. South, West, North, East, all can support Gen. Harrison."⁹⁹ In a letter to Webster, September, 1833, Whittlesey inadvertently outlined the more important of Harrison's advantages as a candidate. The Whig candidate, to have any chance against Van Buren, "must have belonged in former days to the Democratic party . . . I say this from my knowledge of human nature, and the magic influence a name has with the people. He must divide the Jackson party, and concentrate to a considerable extent the friends of Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay."¹⁰⁰ While this letter was unknown to Harrison politicians, their actions nevertheless were in accordance with its counsel. They appealed to Democratic prejudices in behalf of their candidate, and

⁹⁷ *National Intelligencer*, April 2, 1835.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, September 5, 1835.

⁹⁹ *Cincinnati Gazette*, September 18, 1835. The editor, Charles Hammond, had supported Clay in the campaign of 1832.

¹⁰⁰ Whittlesey to Webster, Canfield, September 14, 1833. Webster MSS.

carefully avoided a too close association with the Whig party. The convention which nominated him at Harrisburg, December, 1835, was called by a self-styled Democratic Republican Committee, and an address was published calling upon both parties for support. "The democratic supporters of the present chief magistrate, the democratic Whigs, and the democratic anti-masons may, without losing their party names or giving up their party organization, be cordially invited to appear."¹⁰¹ Harrison's campaign, as in 1840, largely ignored reasoned arguments¹⁰² and relied upon an appeal to mob psychology. "Harrison stock has reached a high premium," McLean was informed in February, 1836, "'drums, pipes and trumpets' is the cry!"¹⁰³ Against these methods the more prosaic Webster had little chance of success; he was "too marked by intellect and independence of soul," a corre-

¹⁰¹ *Niles' Register*, XLIX. 176. Cf. H. R. Mueller, *The Whig Party in Pennsylvania* (New York, 1922), p. 29. The Anti-Masonic party met in Harrisburg at the same time; its candidates and electoral ticket were taken over without change. *National Intelligencer*, December 24, 1835.

¹⁰² Harrison would do well, Biddle declared, to say nothing about his principles. "If General Harrison is taken up as a candidate, it will be on account of the past, not the future. Let him say not one single word about his principles, or his creed—let him say nothing—promise nothing. Let no committee—let no convention—no town meeting extract from him a single word, about what he thinks now, or what he will do hereafter. Let the use of pen and ink be wholly forbidden, as if he were a mad poet in Bedlam." Biddle to Herman Cope, Philadelphia, August 11, 1835. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 256.

¹⁰³ P. C. Gallagher to McLean, Columbus, February 12, 1836. McLean MSS.

spondent declared in the *Intelligencer*, "ever to be a favorite with the people in these degenerate days."¹⁰⁴

Unconvinced by the growth of Harrison's popularity in the West, the more prominent of the Webster newspapers remained loyal to him until his cause was seen to be hopeless. Even then the *Boston Atlas*, the *New York American*, and the *National Gazette* of Philadelphia took only a languid interest in Harrison's fortunes. The attitude of the *Gazette* was doubtless typical of the reactions of Webster's friends everywhere. In October, 1835, it declared that Harrison could not count for success upon his military career. "There is no parity in the case of Harrison with that of Jackson. The charm is not the same. Many circumstances exist . . . to lessen or destroy the influence of the new candidate's military fame."¹⁰⁵ When a charge was made that it preferred defeat in the approaching election to success under Harrison, no ground was given, and it confessed that defeat under a candidate whose real strength would preserve the integrity of the party was more attractive than victory under a discreditable leadership.¹⁰⁶ Those who supported Harrison were, according to the *Gazette*, modelling their tactics upon those of the

¹⁰⁴ *National Intelligencer*, December 29, 1834.

¹⁰⁵ *National Gazette and Literary Register*, October 28, 1835.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, November 6, 1835.

Democratic party, and this surrender to expediency was condemned.

This is a second resort to military prestige, because it was so successfully tried in the case of President Jackson. It is an attempt to profit by the same popular delusion in order to defeat the administration party. We do not think 'the end justifies the means': we apprehend that the means would be more injurious than even the success of Mr. Van Buren.¹⁰⁷

So low was its opinion of Harrison that it declared: "Believing as we do that General Harrison is absolutely unfit for the office of President, we can never concur in recommending him to it, whatever may be done by conventions."¹⁰⁸ Henceforth the *Gazette* took little or no interest in the campaign, and most of the newspapers that had supported Webster followed its example.

There were some who, from the first, doubted the ability of the party to unite upon a single candidate. The diversity of sectional and factional interests was thought to be so great that political parties would find it impossible to remain united. "The next President," J. W. Taylor predicted in September, 1833, "will be chosen by the H. R. and not only the next, but a majority of the future Presidents. The candidates cannot be limited to two. It is probable that there will not be less than four."¹⁰⁹ It was with reluctance

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, November 11, 1835.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, November 14, 1835.

¹⁰⁹ Taylor to McLean, Balliston, N. Y., September 19, 1833. McLean MSS.

that the *Intelligencer* at length abandoned hope of unity. In a series of articles during the summer of 1835 it attempted to clarify the principles of the party. Frank acknowledgment was made of differences "on some minor points of politics" and also in regard to a candidate. "We desire a candidate who will concentrate all our suffrages; and we desire what is impossible . . . Let us go together if we can, but against the legitimates at any rate."¹¹⁰ Later it confessed that the Whig party was without a national organization; however united the various groups were within the states, they had "no common understanding in relation to the affairs of the general government." The party was so seriously divided that any attempt to create union was regarded with suspicion.¹¹¹

Various schemes were proposed to minimize the disadvantage of divided interests and leadership. The *Cincinnati Gazette* suggested that the party might be consulted in a "primary" election with a view to selecting the most acceptable candidate.¹¹² In states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, where there was no clear majority for either Harrison or Webster, the *Concord Courier* advised that identical electoral lists should be submitted to the voters.¹¹³ The needs

¹¹⁰ *National Intelligencer*, July 1, 1835.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 8, 1835.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, August 1, 1835.

¹¹³ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, November 10, 1833.

of the political situation, however, were more clearly understood by Biddle, and his prescription was more practicable. He was convinced that a large majority of the people, not only as regards numbers but also as regards men of property and intelligence, were opposed to the administration. Although they had been unable to agree upon a single candidate, they had a common purpose and were "fixed upon several men who are acceptable to the various sections." Webster should be the candidate in New England, White in the South, "and wherever in any one state there is a strong opposition man—to vote for him. This disease is to be treated as a local disorder—apply local remedies—if General Harrison will run better than anybody else in Pennsylvania, by all means unite upon him."¹¹⁴ The *Intelligencer* agreed with Biddle in urging the "friends of the constitution" in each state to rally in support of the candidate who had the best prospect of carrying it.¹¹⁵ Harrison it could not tolerate, and when in the winter of 1835-1836 it became clear that he was the most popular candidate in the North and West, its interest declined. Few references to politics appeared in its columns from January to August, 1836, although it again advised that an attempt be made to throw the election into the House of Representatives.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Biddle to Herman Cope, Philadelphia, August 11, 1835. Mc-Grane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 255, 256.

¹¹⁵ *National Intelligencer*, November 28, 1835.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, August 13, 1836.

Irreconcilable divisions and the resort to complicated projects designed to prevent the choice of a president by a popular vote killed the enthusiasm with which the Whigs had started the campaign. Party journals made efforts to arouse lagging spirits. Local victories were hailed as prophetic of approaching success, but this optimism was of questionable sincerity. Not only had the party failed to agree upon a candidate, but even as regards campaign issues it had in few respects improved upon the position of the National Republicans in the campaign of 1832. Divided by sectional interests, the appearance of coöperation could be maintained only by continuing a negative attitude. Whig campaign arguments, as reflected in the *Intelligencer's* editorials and clippings, comprised a wide range of criticism directed against the administration,—its failure to carry out promised reforms, the president's arbitrary use of the veto power, the appointment of members of Congress to public office, corruption in the postoffice, attacks upon the Senate and judiciary, the removal of the deposits and the consequent failure to provide for the safety of the public funds.¹¹⁷ Probably few Whigs anticipated success. Adams, though not closely identified with the party, believed Van Buren's election to be as certain as "any event depending upon popular elections could be."¹¹⁸ McLean was informed

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 4, 1835.

¹¹⁸ Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 242.

that the plan to force the election into the House made Van Buren's election certain, "so much are the people opposed to seeing the election devolve upon the House, that knowing Van to [be] the strongest candidate, as he would be if all run, that they would vote for him to prevent such an occurrence."¹¹⁹ In one respect the Whig party benefited by the experience of the National Republicans in 1832; it made no serious effort to bring the Bank issue into the campaign.

Whig divisions made inevitable Van Buren's overwhelming victory. In the South, White succeeded in carrying Georgia, where he had the aid of the disgruntled elements of the Democratic party,¹²⁰ and Tennessee, where Jackson's favoritism for Van Buren had aroused keen resentment. The South Carolina legislature followed an independent course and gave the state's electoral votes to Willie P. Mangum. The most promising result of the election, from the Whig point of view, was the measure of Harrison's strength in a disappointing year. Without political experience and in a campaign covering only a brief period, he carried Ohio, Indiana, New Jersey and Vermont, and lost Illinois and Pennsylvania by a narrow margin. In New England, outside the strongly Anti-Masonic state of Vermont, he

¹¹⁹ George Kesling to McLean, Lebanon, August 10, 1835. McLean MSS.

¹²⁰ U. B. Phillips, "Georgia and State Rights," *Annual Report of American Historical Association* (Washington, 1902), pp. 138, 139.

failed to poll the normal Whig vote, not only in the frontier states of Maine and New Hampshire, where the Democrats were usually strong, but also in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Massachusetts was loyal to its first choice in casting its vote for Webster.

Expediency pointed to Harrison as the logical Whig candidate for the next campaign, but at first it seemed probable that the party's experiences from 1834 to 1836 would be repeated. Clay and Webster again made an effort to keep the party loyal to its traditions. As in 1834, disturbed economic conditions promised to make a Whig triumph so certain that the personality of the nominee would have little practical importance. The crisis of 1837, precipitated by the specie circular and the distribution of the surplus, stimulated a strong movement against Van Buren's administration. It was said again that the turn of the tide would come as a result of the charter election in New York City. Men like Hone hoped that the people would take advantage of this opportunity to express their opinion of Van Buren's "driving . . . according to the Jackson plan."¹²¹ The city, since its prosperity depended upon commerce, was especially affected by prevailing hard times. Improved real estate, bank stocks, railroad and canal shares had all seriously depreciated in value. According to

¹²¹ Hone, *Diary*, I. 89.

Hone, desirable lots at One Hundredth Street, which sold for four hundred and eighty dollars under normal conditions, had been purchased for fifty. "The immense fortunes which we have heard so much about in the days of speculation have melted away like snows under an April sun. No man can calculate to escape ruin. Happy is he who has a little, and is free from debt."¹²² That these conditions favored the Whigs was clear in the election of their candidate for mayor by a majority of more than three thousand.¹²³ But the fall election for the state legislature provided a more decisive test of Whig strength. Chastened by his disappointment under similar circumstances in 1834, Hone feared that "the mountain of misrule in the state is too mighty to be overthrown by a single political convulsion. . . ." The results of a victory under these conditions would be decisive. "The whole United States look to this election as the star to guide them on to victory, and Mr. Van Buren, and his cabinet, and his policy must rise or fall by its result."¹²⁴ The result justified the most exaggerated Whig anticipations. A Democratic majority of sixty in the preceding assembly was changed to a Whig majority of sixty-seven. Niles at once declared this success to be "hailed by the Whigs as a triumph of their principles and a certain indi-

¹²² *Ibid.*, I, 250, 251.

¹²³ *Niles' Register*, LII, 113.

¹²⁴ Hone, *Diary*, I, 277.

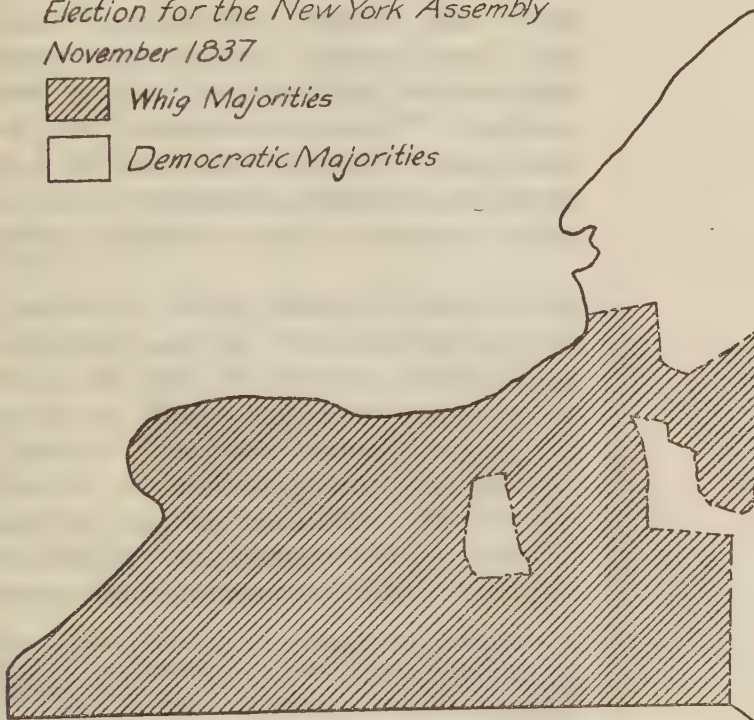
*Election for the New York Assembly
November 1837*



Whig Majorities



Democratic Majorities



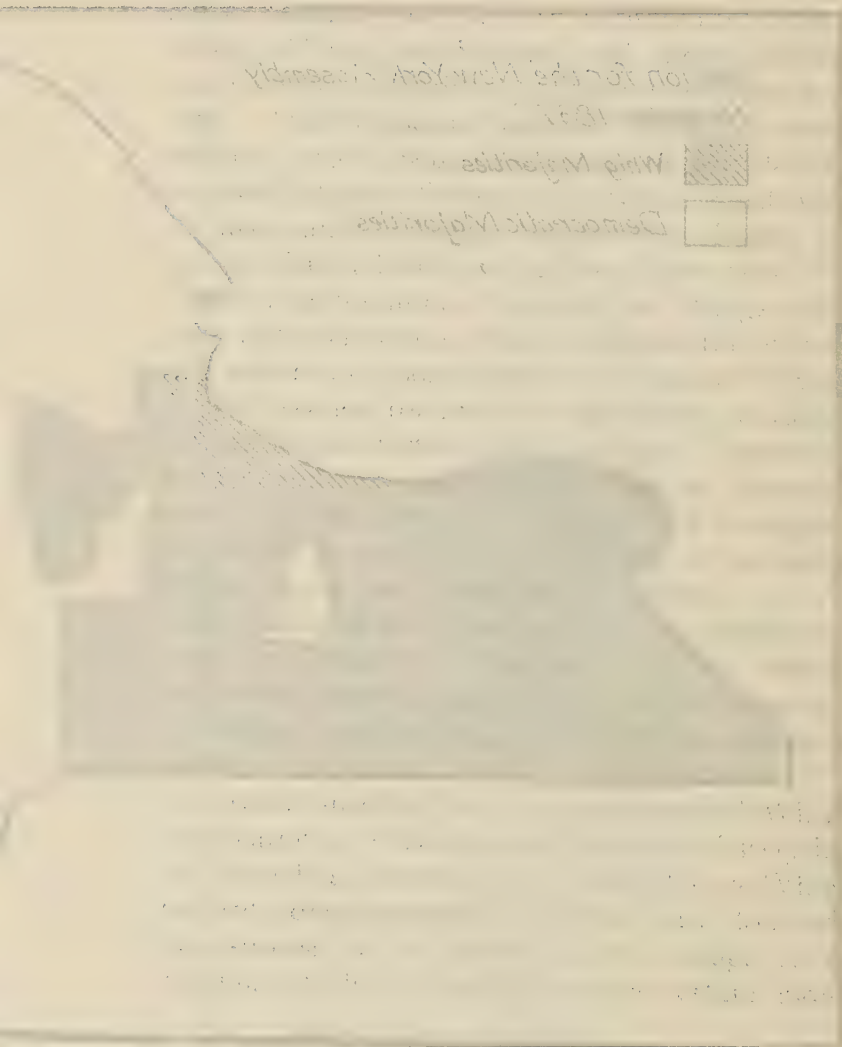
for the New York Assembly

1897

Whig Majesties



Democratic Majesties



cation of the downfall of the present administration,"¹²⁵ and the New York correspondent of the *Intelligencer* arrogantly declared that while Washington made the laws, "Rome is here! You make laws on the Capotiline Hill, but we make you and your principles for you."¹²⁶ Ambrose Spencer, a politician and therefore a more sober observer, saw "everywhere indications of returning sobriety and good sense on the part of the people."¹²⁷

The period of Whig success, however, was again brief, and since the crisis had been precipitated in an odd year, the trend in public opinion in favor of the Whigs was not reflected in national politics. The tide turned towards the Democrats in the following year with the improvement in economic conditions. In October, 1838, the *Boston Atlas* summarized the results of recent state elections under the title "The Bulle-

¹²⁵ *Niles' Register*, LIII. 117. The geographic distribution of the members of the Assembly as a result of the November election was distinctly sectional. The western half of the state, largely settled by people from New England, was true to its past in returning a solid Whig delegation except from Seneca county in the lake district. Practically all of the river counties, including New York City and Long Island, where the results of the crisis were most immediately felt, gave majorities for the Whig candidates. The area between these strongly Whig regions and most of the northern counties, either mountainous in character or undeveloped, elected Democratic members. Statistics of invested capital in 1840 show much larger amounts for the Whig counties than for those that returned Democratic majorities. *Compendium* from the *Returns of the Sixth Census*, etc., (Washington, 1841).

¹²⁶ *National Intelligencer*, September 13, 1837.

¹²⁷ Spencer to Webster, Albany, April 19, 1837. Webster MSS.

tin of the Campaign." Whig governors in Maine, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Ohio had been defeated.¹²⁸ Even the apparently safe state of Massachusetts elected the Democratic candidate, a result which was aided by his opposition to an unpopular temperance law.¹²⁹ Calhoun and his friends, never wholly at ease in their alliance with Clay, took advantage of the sub-treasury controversy to return to the more congenial associations of the Democratic party.¹³⁰ Optimistic prospects had again turned to ashes and dust. A welcome ray of light was seen in New York where the Whigs elected Seward by a safe though seriously reduced majority,¹³¹ a result that doubtless gave local Whig leaders greater influence in the affairs of the national party.

As a result of the return of popularity to the Democratic party, a Whig success in 1840 could no longer be considered a certainty, and therefore a careful selection of a candidate became an imperative necessity. There was a tendency to turn back to preceding elections, and especially to that of 1836, in order to weigh the relative strength of the available candidates. The *Boston Atlas*, hitherto a staunch friend of Webster, was led by these considerations to change its allegiance to Harrison in the summer of 1838. According

¹²⁸ *National Intelligencer*, October 27, 1837.

¹²⁹ *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 197.

¹³⁰ Cole, *Whig Party in the South*, pp. 46-50.

¹³¹ Greeley, *Recollections*, pp. 129, 130.

to the account of William Schouler, historian and a later owner of the *Atlas*, Harrison's nomination was the work of Richard Houghton, proprietor at that time, and of Richard Hildreth, who wrote most of the editorials in the *Atlas*. These men decided that Webster had no prospect of being nominated by the Whigs and that the choice must therefore lie between Harrison and Clay. Believing, according to Schouler, that Clay's strength was largely in states which the Whigs could not possibly win, they determined to unite the friends of Webster and Scott in order to defeat Clay in the Harrisburg convention. It was necessary for success that the party descend "from the forum" and take "the people by the hand."¹³² It is improbable that the *Atlas* was responsible in this degree for Harrison's nomination, but its well known position as a Webster newspaper made its change in policy of notable significance. In July, 1838, it prepared for a later change of policy by urging that the discussion of candidates be suspended until the meeting of a national convention.¹³³ Two months later it openly came out as an advocate of Harrison's nomination. This change of front was due, according to an anonymous letter in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, to a project that would fundamentally alter the character of the Whig party.

¹³² Frederick Hudson, *Journalism in the United States*, pp. 392, 393.

¹³³ *National Intelligencer*, July 13, 1838, quoting *Boston Atlas*, July 13, 1838.

It is now said with all the pomp and circumstance of an original discovery, that the Whig party consists of aristocratic and democratic members—in other words, of two parties in one,—That the respective sections are of course under the influence of different views, feelings and interests, of which those appertaining to the Democratic section only should be consulted ;— that Webster and Clay are so affiliated with the aristocracy of the Whigs as to have lost popularity with the Democratic and more numerous and efficient division of the party.¹³⁴

Early in September the *Atlas* explained that Harrison, of the available candidates, had the best chance of carrying the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, and that “we . . . are of the opinion that it is best to yield to a state of things which it is highly improbable can be changed in time for the next election.”¹³⁵ This decision convinced a correspondent of the *Daily Advertiser* that the *Atlas* was ready to sacrifice the party’s principles. “Every step in its procedure proclaims the creed . . . that party success, is the only measure of political virtue and the only object of political action.”¹³⁶

Suspicion was at once aroused that the *Atlas*’ change of front had Webster’s express or tacit approval and that he proposed to defeat Clay by this diversion. In October, 1838, Clay asserted that the *Atlas* had at least assumed Webster’s

¹³⁴ *Boston Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, December 27, 1838. Three other letters appeared by the same writer in the interest of Webster. Clay was his second choice. *Ibid.*, December 28, 29, 31, 1838.

¹³⁵ *New York American*, September 19, 1838.

¹³⁶ *Boston Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, December 3, 1838.

consent,¹³⁷ and in spite of Webster's disavowal, he remained of this opinion.¹³⁸ Abbott Lawrence, a wealthy Whig of Boston and a friend of Clay, told Adams that Webster was working for Harrison.¹³⁹ C. T. Congdon¹⁴⁰ and William Schouler,¹⁴¹ both of whom were later connected with the *Atlas*, report a tradition in its office that proof of the first editorial in which this change was discussed had been read by Webster and that after a first violent reaction he agreed to take no public notice of it. The *New York American*, however, claimed his authority in predicting that he would remain neutral between Harrison and Clay. Webster had not been in Boston at the time, it claimed, and moreover he had not been informed of the impending change.¹⁴² It is clear, however, that relations between Webster and Clay were cool if not unfriendly and that Massachusetts voted on the first ballot in the Harrisburg convention for Harrison. In any event, an opportune absence in Europe in 1839 provided a convenient escape from the unpleasant necessity of choosing between Harrison and Clay, and while in England he withdrew his own name from

¹³⁷ Clay to Francis Brooke, Ashland, October 9, 1838. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 429.

¹³⁸ Clay to Brooke, Ashland, November 3, 1838. *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 430.

¹³⁹ Adams, *Memoirs*, X. 43.

¹⁴⁰ Congdon, *Reminiscences*, pp. 67, 68.

¹⁴¹ Hudson, *Journalism in the United States*, p. 392.

¹⁴² *New York American*, September 19, 1838.

consideration.¹⁴³ After Harrison's nomination, Samuel Appleton wrote to Webster, who was his father-in-law: "Now we have got the *Clay* off our wheels, we shall get along."¹⁴⁴

Harrison's record in the preceding campaign made him the logical choice for the nomination. Such was the position taken by the Democratic Republican committee of Pennsylvania. His name invigorated the party everywhere. "It broke the inviolability of Federal power and patronage—brought victory where defeat before had awaited us—added state after state to our standard, and placed the destiny of the Democratic party upon the vantage ground in full view of a certain triumph in 1840."¹⁴⁵ Harrison's friends declared that Whig politicians had opposed him in 1836. According to the *Albany Journal*, his nomination "then emanated from the people, and in many portions of the Union never received even the assent, much less the support, of our leading politicians."¹⁴⁶ The Pennsylvania committee feared the lesson of the last election had not been learned: "It was to be hoped that the lesson taught by the last Presidential contest

¹⁴³ Webster to J. P. Healy, London, June 12, 1839. *Webster's Writings* (National Edition), XVI. 311. Cf. *Niles' Register*, LVI. 306.

¹⁴⁴ Appleton to Webster, Boston, March 10, 1840. Van Tyne, *Webster Transcripts*.

¹⁴⁵ Harrison's friends were referred to in this address as the true Democracy. His defeat in 1836 was in part attributed to the plan to throw the election into the House. *National Intelligencer*, April 20, 1838.

¹⁴⁶ *Albany Evening Journal*, December 13, 1839.

would not so soon have been forgotten, and that politicians would have learned to consult the people, and not to control them in the choice of candidates."¹⁴⁷ A correspondent in the *New York American* declared that Harrison's friends were resolved "that the people shall be heard in the selection of their chief magistrate. They are determined that sinister management shall not deprive the people of a voice in the election of their President."¹⁴⁸ Harrison men were convinced that the experiences of the party in 1836 should guide its nomination. "In that slouching Whig defeat of 1836" so Greeley wrote later, "lay the germ of the overwhelming Whig victory of 1840."¹⁴⁹

Those who were convinced that success was certain under Harrison saw no reason for the calling of a national convention. They insisted that the people had nominated him and that formal action was unnecessary. Even in the conservative columns of the *New York American* it was suggested that undue delay in arranging for a convention made it advisable to leave the nomination "to the decision of the people, in their respective primary assemblies, in their respective states."¹⁵⁰ The *Cleveland Herald* recommended

¹⁴⁷ *National Intelligencer*, April 20, 1838.

¹⁴⁸ *New York American*, February 13, 1838.

¹⁴⁹ Greeley, *Recollections*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁰ *New York American*, February 13, 1838.

"the speedy and absolute nomination of General Harrison" rather than waiting for the "uncertain decision of a far distant National Convention."¹⁵¹ The Clay faction and the friends of Webster, before he withdrew from the campaign, generally favored the postponement of nomination until a convention should meet. This was the position of the *Intelligencer*, acting in Clay's interests,¹⁵² and in the interest of harmony Harrison's friends finally agreed.¹⁵³ In spite of the personal differences between Webster and Clay, their friends liked Harrison no better than they did in the campaign of 1836. They still preferred either Webster or Clay as representing the older type of leadership. This point of view was expressed by the *Portland Evening Advertiser* in an editorial which was endorsed by several important newspapers.

We believe that the Whig candidate for President must succeed. It is fortunate for us that the two great men we have named [Clay and Webster] occupy so prominent a station, and stand so decidedly in advance of all others, that one or the other must as we believe, be selected by the convention, which all agree must be held. The attach-

¹⁵¹ *National Intelligencer*, November 21, 1838.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, April 20, 1838. In 1837 Clay suggested that the nomination should be left to a national convention. Clay to a New York committee, Ashland, August 6, 1837. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 416.

¹⁵³ This was the decision of the Ohio State Whig Committee; nevertheless Harrison's nomination was recommended. *National Intelligencer*, June 6, 1838.

ment to both is universal. Let the choice fall upon either, and it rests on one 'whom all delight to honor'."¹⁵⁴

The withdrawal of Webster's name narrowed the contest to Clay and Harrison with Winfield Scott as the dark horse. After the election of 1836 Clay's attitude was receptive in regard to a nomination, and in 1837 he thought he would again be forced into the arena.¹⁵⁵ A year later he was convinced that his strength was increasing.¹⁵⁶ However, the hostility of leading politicians in New York became apparent when Weed in May, 1838, dissuaded the Whigs of New York city from openly declaring for Clay.¹⁵⁷ At Buffalo, while on his northern tour in the summer of 1839, he declared that he was ready to withdraw if the party's interests demanded it,¹⁵⁸ but the *Intelligencer* announced in October that he was still in the race.¹⁵⁹ Definite opposition to Clay developed in the pivotal state of New York on two counts. In his Taylorsville speech he adopted, it was charged, a hostile attitude toward the anti-slavery movement.¹⁶⁰ He also urged co-

¹⁵⁴ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 3, 1838. This editorial was printed and endorsed by the *New York American*, January 3, 1838.

¹⁵⁵ Clay to G. D. Prentice, Ashland, August 14, 1837. Colton, *Private Correspondence*, p. 418.

¹⁵⁶ Clay to Francis Brooke, Washington, April 14, 1838. *Ibid.*, p. 426.

¹⁵⁷ Barnes, *Memoir of Weed*, p. 58.

¹⁵⁸ *Niles' Register*, LVI. 346, 347.

¹⁵⁹ *National Intelligencer*, October 12, 1839.

¹⁶⁰ *Niles' Register*, LVIII. 322-326.

operation with the "Conservatives"¹⁶¹ and thereby incurred the displeasure of the Whig extremists, who would consent to no association with them.¹⁶² Francis Granger, former Anti-Mason and the vice-presidential candidate with Harrison in 1836, was one of those who believed that Clay's nomination would be fatal to the party's chances of success. "It seems to me that Mr. Clay's strongest friends feel that however just it may be to give him the nomination, it would be but to place a bauble above his clutch and leave him in a worse position than at present." According to Granger, a group of New York congressmen who agreed with this conclusion decided so to inform the state delegation in the National Convention.¹⁶³ Clay in fact did not possess qualities which were most desired by Whig politicians. His protracted experience in politics was not highly valued by politicians who understood the prevailing confidence in the

¹⁶¹ A group of Democrats under the leadership of Senators Rives of Virginia and Tallmadge of New York and known as the "Conservatives" seceded from the party in protest against Van Buren's recommendation of the independent treasury. The *New York American* refused to countenance an attempt to profit by this split in Democratic ranks, since that would entail coöperation with men who once had been Democrats.

¹⁶² Francis Granger to Weed, May 1, 1838. Barnes, *Memoir of Weed*, pp. 57, 58. According to Henry A. Wise, later a member of Tyler's "corporal guard" and thus presumably prejudiced against Clay, the latter had made certain pledges which satisfied the most extreme Democrats in order to win the support of Judge White. Henry A. Wise, *Seven Decades of the Union* (Richmond, 1881), pp. 167, 168.

¹⁶³ Granger to Weed, Washington, November (?), 1839. Granger MSS.

capacity of ordinary men. Moreover, his experience was a positive disadvantage in that he had thereby aroused much personal hostility. Charles B. Penrose, an Anti-Masonic leader in Pennsylvania who was to play an important part in Harrison's nomination, wrote to Biddle that "his long and brilliant career in public life while it furnishes much to admire is fruitful of topics upon which he is vulnerable to the prejudices of large masses of the people of the United States."¹⁶⁴ It was true that Clay, like Harrison, could claim a democratic origin, but in spite of his magnetic personality, he had not retained his popularity with the crowd. In 1835 Adams explained this change: "Clay as you know rose upon the broadest shoulders of democracy. But his European expedition tinged both his principles and his deportment with aristocracy, perhaps to the improvement of his character, but to the loss of his standing with the democracy."¹⁶⁵

In accordance with the call issued by the Whig congressional caucus, a move that had been suggested by various state conventions,¹⁶⁶ the national convention met at Harrisburg, December 4, 1839.¹⁶⁷ Harrison's friends had complained that

¹⁶⁴ Penrose to Biddle, February 29, 1839. Biddle MSS.

¹⁶⁵ Adams to A. H. Everett, December 1, 1835. J. Q. Adams MSS. Library of Congress.

¹⁶⁶ *Niles' Register*, LIV. 178. The Caucus called the convention to meet at Harrisburg on the first Wednesday in December, 1839. *National Intelligencer*, May 15, 1838.

¹⁶⁷ *Niles' Register*, LVII. 249-252.

the politicians were opposed to him; if this were true at an earlier date, they had now been replaced by a new group devoted to his cause. In his interest, the convention restricted the discussion of candidates to the various state delegations and adopted the unit rule.¹⁶⁸ Motions were introduced for these purposes by Penrose, acting in Harrison's behalf, and by Joseph Sprague, a delegate from Massachusetts and a friend of Webster. This interesting coöperation between Harrison and Webster men and the distribution of votes on the first ballot indicate clearly the groups that made Harrison's nomination possible. Clay had the support of a solid South and in addition the votes of Illinois, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The unit rule nullified Clay's strength in other northern states. Clay won a plurality on the first ballot, but Harrison polled the votes of Indiana, Ohio, Maine, and New Hampshire among the states under western or frontier influences. The support of Webster's friends in Massachusetts also went to him as did that of the Pennsylvania delegation under the influence of Anti-Masonic leaders. Holding the balance of power, after casting their votes for Scott on the first ballot, New York and New Jersey later changed to Harrison and thus assured his nomination.¹⁶⁹ The result was due to a com-

¹⁶⁸ H. R. Mueller, *Whig Party in Pennsylvania*, pp. 60, 61.

¹⁶⁹ A Whig meeting in New York city drew up a statement in which the charge was made that the state delegation had been

bination of the western or frontier delegations, the Anti-Masons, and the friends of Webster.

Old leaders were pushed into the background. In naming Harrison as its candidate, the Whig party passed under the control of men whose exclusive interest was a victory in 1840. Harrison was an admirable instrument for this purpose. Even his lack of political experience was not a disadvantage, as perhaps the majority of votes did not consider experience essential, and as he had not created enemies in old political controversies. According to the anti-Van Buren committee of Pennsylvania, he would not make a merely sectional appeal. Born in Virginia, he could claim "the love and confidence of the South," while long residence in Ohio and "his eminent political services had endeared him to all classes in the northern and western states." In brief, "his name subdues all prejudices and encounters none."¹⁷⁰ Chastened by the failure of the National Republicans in 1828 and 1832 and that of the Whigs in 1836, politicians were now convinced that the Democrats should be fought with their own weapons. Harrison in analysing the ele-

instructed for Scott by the Harrison men. By this means delegates were selected who would change to Harrison at the proper time. *Albany Evening Journal*, August 17, 1839, quoting *New York Courier and Enquirer*, August 15, 1839. Weed relates that Harrison's nomination was decided at a meeting between the New York and Pennsylvania delegations at which it was agreed that Clay could carry neither state. Weed, *Autobiography*, p. 431.

¹⁷⁰ *Nile's Register*, LVIII. pp. 190, 191.

ments of his own political strength implied that on this account he should be nominated.

I am amongst the oldest and most extensively known of the Western pioneers. I have stood in the relation to many thousand of our citizens as their commander or brother soldier. Now, it so happens that almost all of the pioneers and old soldiers of the West were on the side of the administration, brought over to that side by their attachment to General Jackson; and that attachment was produced by his being himself one of the class to which it was their boast to belong. He out of the way, is there any difficulty in believing that they might be willing again to give support to another of the same class, although of inferior pretensions, rather than to anyone whose pursuits and course of life had no semblance to their own.¹⁷¹

The failure of the Harrisburg Convention to submit a platform with Harrison's nomination testified to its dread of controversial topics, and it also indicated that success was the single purpose of the party. All could unite in the effort to defeat Van Buren, with the understanding that the determination of the party's program would be delayed until after the election. Accordingly, the *Intelligencer* contributed its entire strength to the campaign, although it had supported Clay.¹⁷² Philip Hone was one of those who had insisted that the party should nominate either Clay or Webster, but when he saw the enthusiasm which Harrison's nomination aroused, the lure of an almost certain victory persuaded him to support

¹⁷¹ Harrison to J. R. Giddings, December 15, 1838. G. W. Julian, *The Life of J. R. Giddings* (Chicago, 1892), p. 55.

¹⁷² *National Intelligencer*, December 10, 1839.

a lesser man.¹⁷³ In December, 1839, Granger wrote to Weed that "Everybody's trying to smooth down the rough edges, and we shall succeed in doing it. Southern Whigs seem more disposed to stick to the integrity of the party than I ever knew them, and more disposed to give up their peculiar, individual whims."¹⁷⁴ John Tyler was named as the candidate for the vice-presidency as a means of attracting the dissatisfied Democratic vote in the South.

The Whig party applied the lessons of its experience not only in its nomination but also in divorcing itself from the Bank issue. This issue rapidly declined in favor after the disaster of 1832.¹⁷⁵ Niles frankly acknowledged that the defeat of Clay sealed the Bank's fate unless a change of public opinion should occur.¹⁷⁶ In 1834 Clay declared that the Bank question was a most unprofitable issue and that attention should be concentrated upon the President's usurpation of power.¹⁷⁷ Early in his career, Weed reached the conclusion that support of the Bank had no promise: "I was not long in discovering that it

¹⁷³ Hone, *Diary*, I. pp. 393, 398.

¹⁷⁴ Granger to Weed, Washington, December 9, 1839. Granger MSS.

¹⁷⁵ The *Intelligencer* was an exception. On many occasions, it refused to interpret Clay's defeat as a definite repudiation of the Bank; one faction of the Democratic party was tolerant of the national bank idea, and another would support the renewal of the existing charter with modifications.

¹⁷⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLIII. 177.

¹⁷⁷ Clay to Biddle, Washington, February 2, 1834. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, p. 220.

was easy to enlist the laboring classes against a 'monster bank' or 'moneyed aristocracy', and that as a political issue, we should lose more than we would gain by it. . . . I steadily ignored the bank issue, insisting on all proper occasions that it 'hung like a mill-stone' about our necks."¹⁷⁸ When Tyler in 1841 declared himself against the incorporation of a national bank, Clay insisted that the election of 1840 had been won on that issue. He was mistaken, for it played no important part in the campaign. The *Intelligencer*, after the election of 1836, abandoned its persistent support of the Bank and declared that it was no longer an issue.¹⁷⁹ This attitude was maintained through 1837,¹⁸⁰ and early in the following year, it stated in no uncertain terms that it was hopeless to expect a new charter. "We state our belief and our apprehension, that there is very little probability that . . . we will live to witness the establishment of another Bank of the United States. Such a measure will certainly never be accomplished but under the influence of a necessity stronger than any that now exists."¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Weed, *Autobiography*, pp. 371, 424. The Anti-Masonic party after 1832 was willing to sacrifice the Bank in order to advance its own interests. In September, 1834, the Dauphin County Convention in Pennsylvania declared that the party's principles must prevail, "let the Bank sink or swim." McCarthy, *Anti-Masonic Party*, p. 461. Governor Palmer of Vermont, an Anti-Mason, declared in his inaugural address that he was opposed to the renewal of the charter. *Ibid.*, p. 514.

¹⁷⁹ *National Intelligencer*, May 3, 1837.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, September 28, 1837.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, February 27, 1838.

Whigs became exceedingly sensitive to the charge that the party was irrevocably associated with the Bank issue.

'Bank! Bank! Bank! has been the cry of alarm resorted to on all occasions, by the opponents of a sound currency and a safe system of finance, when argument failed them, to drown the voice of common sense . . . Before, behind, and all around us, we hear little else than execrations against the Bank and Biddle, Biddle and the Bank.'¹⁸²

In December, 1838, the *Intelligencer* declared that there was "no immediate occasion for the establishment of another National Bank,"¹⁸³ and in August of the following year it asserted that "the question of a bank is not now before the country."¹⁸⁴ Thereafter, the subject was given scant attention in its columns. Even Clay used much discretion in his references to the Bank. He remarked, vaguely enough, in his Taylorsville speech that the question "'should be left to the arbitrament of an enlightened public opinion,'" and that he was ready to accept another method, if one could be found, for the maintenance of a sound currency.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, March 20, 1838.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, December 13, 1838.

¹⁸⁴ Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I. 625. Quoting the *National Intelligencer*, August 1, 1840. Even the Bank, which had secured a state charter in Pennsylvania seems to have given up hope, as in 1838 it was quite willing to affect an understanding with the administration. McGrane, *Biddle Correspondence*, pp. 273, 274, 321-323, 324, 325.

¹⁸⁵ Carl Schurz, *Life of Henry Clay*, (Boston, 1887), pp. 186-188.

Definite issues, in fact, were at a discount in the campaign of 1840. Not only did the politicians think it inexpedient to prepare a platform, but steps were taken to prevent Harrison from committing himself upon troublesome questions.¹⁸⁶ Clay was ready at all times to act as the Moses for his party, but even he was not certain that a definite statement of principles should be made.¹⁸⁷ Much was made of the alleged union between the sword and the purse under Van Buren, but the real strength of the Whig position was in the general desire, caused in part by economic disturbances,¹⁸⁸ for a change of adminis-

¹⁸⁶ A committee was appointed which kept a check on his correspondence. Harrison called it "my conscience keeping committee." Harrison to James Lyon, North Bend, June 1, 1840. *National Intelligencer*, August 29, 1840. A Democratic meeting in Pennsylvania declared it to be a fundamental principle of democracy that a candidate for the presidency should make a "fair, full and frank exposure of his principles and of his course which he will pursue if elected." *Niles' Register*, LVIII. 411. Harrison's position was expressed in vague and general terms in a letter to Harmar Denny, December 2, 1838. *Niles' Register*, LV. 360, 361.

¹⁸⁷ In May, 1840, Clay asked advice of Clayton as to making a statement of issues. "Favor me . . . with an expression of your opinion as to promulgating anything like a creed. The danger is of supplying fresh aliment for demagogues. On the other hand, I think, perhaps erroneously, that the Harrisburg convention having omitted to publish any Address, our cause suffers from the imputation of the other side that the Whigs have no principles which they dare openly avow. It is a safe general rule that it is best to remain silent and not act, unless you are fully convinced that what you mean to say or do is right; and in this instance I do not wish to depart from the rule. Unless therefore you and one or two other friends should think the movement judicious I do not wish to make it." Clay to Clayton, Wilmington, May 29, 1840. Clayton MSS.

¹⁸⁸ According to Weed, "The element of strength in the presidential canvass was opposition to the financial policy of Mr. Van Buren's administration, a policy which paralyzed the industries of the country." Weed, *Autobiography*, p. 492.

tration.¹⁸⁹ Van Buren lacked the hold upon the people that had been Jackson's, and he in turn was denounced "not only as a graceless aristocrat and a dandy, but a cunning conspirator seeking the overthrow of his country's liberties . . ." ¹⁹⁰ Nathan Sargent, a contemporary observer, declared that the people were not interested in Harrison's capacity; what they wanted and were determined to have was "a change in the government."¹⁹¹

The Whig party was organized in 1834 for the specific purpose of driving out of power the men who were charged with the responsibility for the prevailing economic depression. However, it was not at liberty to select its candidates or its issues or to determine its methods, because it was the heir of the National Republican party. In this inheritance, among other things, was the leadership of men like Webster and Clay, with their dissensions and attachments to issues of doubtful popularity. Adams was discarded as a result of his defeat in 1828, and like judgment was passed upon Clay after 1832, from which he was unable to recover in 1839. Webster, the last of the triumvirate, was set aside in 1838. Thus the Whig party repudiated its old leadership and turned to men who were ready to copy Democratic methods and

¹⁸⁹ This is the substance of a pamphlet written by Calvin Colton. *The Crisis of the County* by "Junius." Library of Congress.

¹⁹⁰ G. W. Julian, *Political Recollections*, 1840-1871. (Chicago, 1884), I. 11.

¹⁹¹ Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, I. 110.

even to go beyond them. Old issues were discarded in favor of a campaign of sentimentalism. This transition in the character of the Whig party is implied in the *Albany Journal's* reflections.

Indeed since 1825, we have never entertained any hope of success. The Whig party, for three successive Presidential conflicts, has been in a false position. We have been forced to fight upon wrong issues. Nor have we in our past campaigns, presented a united front. . . . But all is right now. The great and powerful Whig party is at last united. Every incumbrance has been thrown off.¹⁹²

In the flush of success politicians were not likely to regret that among these "incumbrances" were the party's ablest men and the principles for which they stood. The reward was a brief tenure of power in 1841; the penalty was the disruption of the party when, under Tyler, dissension became active again.

¹⁹² *Albany Evening Journal*, December 13, 1839.

CHAPTER V

EXPEDIENCY VERSUS CONSISTENCY

“THE political parties which I style great are those which cling to principles rather than to their consequences; to general, and not to special cases; to ideas, and not to men America has had great parties, but she has them no longer.”¹ De Tocqueville based this opinion upon his observations of American politics in 1831, but the appearance of the Whig party in 1834 in no sense lessened its pertinence. Principles had little part in the origins of the Whig party. Except for occasional periods of economic depression, the majority of voters were Democratic,² and therefore, in order to have any prospect of success, the opposition to the Democrats developed as an alliance of all who were dissatisfied with the Democratic control of the

¹ Alexis C. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Cambridge, 1873), I. p. 226.

² Van Buren believed that “experience had satisfactorily demonstrated the fact that as to the two great parties which divided the country the spontaneous feelings of a large majority of the People were on our side; that whenever we were defeated the result could be traced to specific and extraneous causes. . . .” Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 222.

government.³ The addition of Anti-Masons during and after the campaign of 1832 and of the "Conservatives"⁴ in 1837 brought in elements that were hostile to the Bank issue. The coöperation of Calhoun and Clay's compromise of 1833 created differences upon the tariff. In 1834 Adams complained that all parties had abandoned his scheme of internal improvements.

My own system of administration, which was to make the national domain the inexhaustible fund for progressive and unceasing internal improvement, has failed. Systematically renounced and denounced by the present Administration, it has been undisguisedly abandoned by H. Clay, ingloriously deserted by J. C. Calhoun and silently given up by D. Webster. These are the opposition aspirants to the Presidential succession, not one of them having a system of administration which he would dare to avow, and at this time scarcely linked together by the

³ *Whig Almanac and United States Register* (N. Y., 1838), p. 3. Cf., Wise, *Seven Decades*, pp. 165-167. Adams analyzed the various elements of the Whig party in December, 1835. "The opposition to Van Buren consists 1. Of part of the Southern democracy: deserters from Jacksonism in two divisions—one of Calhoun nullifiers, chiefly confined to South Carolina. . . . The other of White Tennesseans. . . . They will probably unite all the servile votes of the South. I mean all the votes which will be biased exclusively by slave holding passions, prejudices and panic. . . . 2. Of western Clay Democrats or rather all Clay Democrats. . . . 3. The Webster federalists. All the remnants of blue-light federalism have rallied together and made Webster their forlorn hope. . . . 4. The Pennsylvania and perhaps the Vermont Anti-Masons 5. The Wolf portion of the Pennsylvania democracy. . . . It is needless to say that of these five parties . . . there are no two that hold any great political principle in common. Most of them call themselves Whigs, only for the sake of calling their adversaries Tories." Adams to A. H. Everett, Washington, December 1, 1835. J. Q. Adams MSS.

⁴ The "Conservatives," many of whom owned stock in New York state banks, wished to maintain the pet bank system.

brittle bond of common opposition to the unprincipled absurdities of the present incumbent.⁵

The American System, with its subsidiary issues, accordingly was either frankly rejected or tacitly adjourned to a more favorable occasion. Loyalty to no definite principles or issue, except that of ousting Van Buren, according to Weed in 1839, was required in order to be a good Whig. The party, he declared, included all those who were convinced that the Democrats were responsible for hard times and that therefore they should be driven from office. "He who thus believes from the evidence presented to his mind, and acts in accordance with that belief, is a Whig, no matter by what name he has been or is called."⁶

Divided upon principles, the opposition had to contend with other disruptive influences. This study reveals the remarkable ease with which political leaders changed their party ties in the Jacksonian period. More concerned with the interests of his section than with those of any party, Calhoun first abandoned the Democrats in 1832 and, after a brief union with the Whigs, returned to his former allegiance in 1838. McLean repeatedly followed the will o' the wisp of a fusion party. Webster dallied in 1833 with the idea of a nationalist party with himself and Jackson as its leaders. This instability was in part

⁵ Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 160.

⁶ *Albany Evening Journal*, November 25, 1839.

due to the absence of a permanent and well-defined party organization and to the consequent absence of party discipline. The ambitions of leaders who could not resist the lure of the presidency also contributed to the persistent confusion within the opposition. Almost without exception its chieftains considered ways and means of winning the Anti-Masonic nomination in 1832. However, political issues played a too important part to label this a period of merely personal politics. When party lines were broken, as they frequently were, it was usually the result of differences upon political questions.

There was also danger that the party would split along sectional lines. While this was a possible result of the tariff issue,⁷ unity was more seriously threatened by the slavery question. The South was forced into a defensive position by the abolition movement, and sectional solidarity, already advocated against the protective tariff, was thereby immensely strengthened. Abolition had its origins in a humanitarian movement which had no relation to parties. Nevertheless, according to a Connecticut newspaper, there were politicians in each party who wished to fasten the responsibility for it upon their opponents. "All this we regret to see. We do not believe that either party, as such, have had any concern in promoting the cause of the abolitionists. The

⁷ This of course was a contributing factor in the support which the South gave to Judge White in 1836.

leaders of both parties have sagacity enough to see that there is nothing to be gained by such a connection."⁸ When the flood of anti-slavery petitions in the House of Representatives precipitated the struggle over the right of petition, it was clear that the slavery question endangered party unity in the common purpose of defeating the Democratic administration. The South immediately took alarm and insisted that the federal government should in no way concern itself with the question. Its policy, as expressed in the gag resolutions, of not allowing a hearing for the petitions, was not only a tactical blunder which at once involved the right of petition; but an analysis of the votes upon these resolutions shows a perfect sectional alignment between northern and southern Whigs.⁹ Northern Whigs declared on

⁸ *National Intelligencer*, October 3, 1835, quoting the *Courant*.

⁹ The first of the gag resolutions, third of a series of resolutions by Pinckney of South Carolina, was adopted by the House, May 26, 1836, as a result of a combination of the Democratic members of both sections and of the southern Whigs with only two exceptions. *Congressional Globe*, 24 Congress, 1 Session, p. 505. When it was decided in the following session, January 9, 1837, to receive and then to table anti-slavery petitions, the same division occurred within the Whig party. On this occasion, however, northern Democrats voted with the Whigs of that section in favor of receiving the petitions. *Ibid.*, 24 Congress, 2 Session, pp. 79, 80. On January 18, 1837, the House returned to the policy of the preceding session, that is to table the petitions by adopting the Hawes resolution by a vote of almost two to one. All but eight of the southern Whigs voted for it, while only three of the northern wing of the party supported the resolution. *House Journal*, 24 Congress, 2 Session, p. 236. The sectional alignment within the party appeared again in the vote which defeated the resolution to censure Adams, February 9, 1837. On this issue, the northern Whigs refused to act with their southern associates against him. *Ibid.*, 24 Congress, 2 Session, p. 364. When the more extreme resolution for the purpose of silencing the anti-slavery agitation

the floor of the House that the Democrats were responsible for violating the right of petition in that the gag resolutions could not have passed without their practically solid support. The same charge could be made, however, with equal justice against the southern wing of their own party, and therefore, as by common consent, Whig newspapers gave little attention to debates in Congress on the right of petition or to the slavery question in general.¹⁰ In January, 1839, the *Intelligencer* declared that it had no intention of discussing any aspect of slavery.¹¹ The question cut across both parties, and therefore Democrats as well as

so far as the House was concerned was adopted, December 21, 1837, a perfect sectional division took place within the party. Not a southern or a northern Whig departed from his sectional allegiance. *Ibid.*, 25 Congress, 2 Session, p. 129.

¹⁰ Charles Shepard, a Democratic member of the House from North Carolina, in an address to his constituents, December, 1838, drew a moral from the votes on the gag resolutions. "I am far from saying that all the northern Whigs are favorable to the schemes of these misguided people [the Abolitionists], but Mr. Van Buren having early taken ground against them, and his friends in Congress having voted with the southern delegation thereby incurring the hatred of the fanatics, whilst the Whigs have received their thanks and praises, it is not unreasonable to conclude that one party is much sounder than the other." *Niles' Register*, LV. p. 341.

¹¹ *National Intelligencer*, January 7, 1839. The question of the disposal of the public lands also threatened the unity not only of the Whig but also of the Democratic party. At first, the South and the West were united against the East in favor of the pre-emption act of 1830. Clay consistently acted with the East in opposing a liberal treatment of the squatter, and in 1838 he was supported by Calhoun who recommended the cession of the public lands to the states. This question could not be made a party issue, however, because of the greater influence of the sectional interests involved. B. H. Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies* (N. Y., 1924), pp. 152-258.

Whigs tacitly agreed that the question should not be made a political issue.

The Whig party was constantly threatened by these disruptive tendencies, but a variety of influences were also operating in the direction of a real union. Jackson and Van Buren aroused an intensity of dislike that often obscured minor differences. The attitude of many Whigs was expressed in November, 1834, in a letter from Thurlow Weed to Francis Granger. He would have few regrets for the failure of the party in the recent New York election "if our defeats were not victories for those I hate, and who ought to be hated."¹² There was a general agreement that the control of the government was in dangerous hands and that rotation in office was undermining sound principles. According to a Whig pamphlet, published in 1835, before Jackson's administration "Office was considered as a public commission created for the service of the people, as the state itself is constituted for their benefit. The emoluments of the office were not held to be the object of its creation . . . change in office was deemed a misfortune. . . ."¹³ Jackson had departed from this wise policy in introducing the practice of rotation in office.

What is this doctrine? It is, that offices are established, not as the necessary means of administering the Government, but for the support of individuals at the

¹² Weed to Granger, Albany, November 23, 1834. Granger MSS.

¹³ *The Political Mirror, a Review of Jacksonianism* (N. Y., 1835), pp. 6, 7.

public expense, and that the incumbents are to be removed, from time to time, as the people generally may partake of official emolument. The immediate effect of the doctrine is to awaken the cupidity of all the idle and ambitious of the land; to turn them from every consideration of patriotism in the formation of party attachments, and to substitute for it, a blind devotion to powerful leaders. It holds out the idea that *all men* are qualified for *all offices*, and decries the value of experience, faithfulness and skill.¹⁴

Whigs were agreed that the quality of the new office-holders was extremely low. An anonymous contributor in the *Intelligencer* declared in one of a series of commemorative articles after the death of John Marshall that "men have jugged up into public station to which they would no more have aspired in the days of Washington than they would have attempted to subvert the order of nature."¹⁵ According to J. B. Derby, a former Federalist who had supported Jackson until the removal of the deposits in 1833, the Massachusetts Democrats "sought recruits only in the kennels and gutters,"¹⁶ and their organization obtained "under Jackson . . . every lucrative office in Boston in the gift of the President."¹⁷

Much use was made by Whigs of an alleged unconstitutional extension of the executive powers. According to the *Intelligencer* in December, 1829, Jackson's pronouncements on foreign af-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵ *National Intelligencer*, August 22, 1835.

¹⁶ J. B. Derby, *Political Reminiscences* (Boston, 1835), p. 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

fairs "sound, for a Republican President, rather too imperially."¹⁸ The next year, in connection with the Maysville Road veto, it declared that the president had no power, as Jackson had alleged in his veto message, to instruct Congress as to the bills it should not pass.¹⁹ After Jackson's veto of the bill to recharter the National Bank, the *Intelligencer* protested that the president should have no power to defeat the will of the people as expressed through a clear majority in both houses,²⁰ and, after the removal of the deposits, it advised Congress not to pass "any appropriation or money bills of any nature whatsoever, until they have vindicated the rights which the Executive has determined to outrage, and secured them against further infraction or invasion from that source."²¹ Niles declared, in regard to the Maysville Road veto, that the framers of the constitution had not intended that the veto should be used against bills originating in the House of Representatives, and that in his opinion only those should be vetoed that were declared unconstitutional by the attorney general or by the chief justice of the Supreme Court upon the president's request for an opinion.²² Whig opinion as to the proper relations between the president and

¹⁸ *National Intelligencer*, December 12, 1829.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1830.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, July 14, 1832.

²¹ *Ibid.*, October 7, 1833.

²² *Niles' Register*, XL. 146.

cabinet officers varied at different times. When Jackson's cabinet was dissolved in 1831, Niles asserted that "the secretaries are only as *clerks* of the president, presumed to have no will or power in themselves unless specially delegated,"²³ and in 1840 Clay took the opposite position in claiming that they should be merely under the general supervision of the president.²⁴ Differences also appeared in regard to Jackson's practice of appealing directly to the people. The *Intelligencer* saw nothing to criticize in the President addressing the people in his message vetoing the Maysville Road bill. "The President is responsible to the People, and they have a right to pass on his official acts. It is but just, therefore, that he should be heard in vindication of his official acts."²⁵ Webster in his famous speech in New York March, 1837, denied that the president was in any special sense the representative of the people; if he were, there was no limit to the powers he could claim.²⁶

The position of the Whigs varied according to particular circumstances, but they were consistent in their vague criticism of the expansion of executive power. After the *National Gazette* abandoned its hope in 1833 of a modification of

²³ *Ibid.*, XL. 145.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, LVIII. 322-326. Members of the cabinet should be held responsible, Clay thought, by means of impeachment.

²⁵ *National Intelligencer*, June 19, 1830.

²⁶ Webster, *Writings* (National Edition), XI. 210.

Jackson's Bank policy by means of Webster's influence, it expressed the Whig point of view in no uncertain terms.

Presidential power, as claimed and exercised, nullifies laws and charters—is limited only by personal desire and will,—and reduces the first functionaries in the departments to a subserviency as slavish and indefinite and dependence as degrading and complete as any which ever existed at the footstool of Asiatic despots.²⁷

The Senate, according to one of McLean's correspondents in May, 1834, was the single safeguard against an irresponsible executive. "Let it be removed and what remains—an ambitious President with one foot upon the constitution of his country, the other on the revenue—the sword of state brandishing in his hands while he dictates to a corrupt and crouching house the terms of its precarious and slender existence."²⁸ Edward Everett declared in the summer of 1834 that the whole force of party discipline was used by the President to enforce his will upon the House.²⁹ According to Adams, the balance of power had shifted from Congress to the President.

There is a tone of insolence and insult in his intercourse with both Houses of Congress, especially since his reelection, which never was witnessed between the Executive and legislature before. The domineering has heretofore been usually on the side of the legislative

²⁷ *National Gazette and Literary Register*, November 26, 1833.

²⁸ J. McMahon to McLean, St. Clairsville, Ohio., May 28, 1834. McLean MSS.

²⁹ *Niles' Register*, XLVI. p. 452.

bodies to the Executive, and Clay has not been sparing in his use of it. He is now paid in his own coin.³⁰

In the campaign of 1840, Harrison made use of the Whig dislike of executive power as a means of avoiding definite pledges. "Congress should be left as much as possible untrammelled by executive influence," he wrote to the Whig committee of the New York legislature, "and . . . a better guarantee for a correct conduct of a chief magistrate may be found in his character and the course of his former life, than in pledges and opinions given during the pendency of a doubtful contest. . . ." He believed that there was no constitutional justification for making the executive "a constituent branch of the legislature."³¹

Whigs were especially aroused by the alleged domination of Congress, and particularly of the House of Representatives, by the executive department. Newspapers, pamphlets, and the speeches of party leaders made this their chief stock in trade. Attacking the attitude of the executive in his relations with Congress, much was naturally said of the necessity for the independence of the legislative department. The at-

³⁰ Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 51. In April, 1839, the *Intelligencer* quoted the *Harrisburg Reporter*, described as the Democratic organ in Pennsylvania, to the effect that an amendment would be submitted by the legislature removing the life tenure of the federal judiciary. *National Intelligencer*, April 18, 1839.

³¹ *Niles' Register*, LVIII. p. 294. "The habit," he declared, "of considering the individual [i. e. the President] as the source from which all the measures of government should emanate is degrading to a republic and of the most dangerous tendency." Cf. *Ibid.* LVIX. pp. 70-71.

tention devoted to this topic and the immense amount of campaign material of which this is the central theme persuaded older historians to interpret the Whig party in the light of political science by reading into it a defence of congressional as opposed to presidential government.³² It was obviously the exigencies of practical politics that brought the Whigs to the defense of Congress against the powers of the president, rather than a general agreement in support of a theory of congressional government. It was not so much the extension of the president's powers that aroused the anger of the Whigs as it was the character and the party ties of Jackson and Van Buren. The Whig defense of Congress was the necessary result of the charges of executive encroachment. However, when an opportunity appeared in 1837 for a direct issue with the Van Buren administration in regard to the executive control of the House, the Whig party refused to take advantage of it and decided to continue its policy of criticising the expansion of executive power in somewhat vague terms.

Richard Fletcher, a member of the twenty-fifth Congress from Boston, in the course of a speech delivered in Faneuil Hall in November, 1837, declared that the business of the House during the

³² J. W. Burgess, *The Middle Period* (N. Y., 1904), pp. 281-284. Cf., William MacDonald, *Jacksonian Democracy*, pp. 294, 295. This interpretation of the Whig party appeared in a campaign pamphlet by J. P. Kennedy in 1844. *Defence of the Whigs, by a member of the Twenty Seventh Congress* (J. P. Kennedy), pp. 12, 48, 49.

extra session, which had been called to deal with the existing financial crisis, had been controlled at every step by the heads of departments and by the President. This control was exercised through the committee on ways and means of whose nine members only two were opposed to the administration.

The committee, you imagine, look over the message, see what is recommended to be done for the benefit of the country; consult together as to the best measures; and lay the results of their deliberations before the House. . . . I once entertained the same ideas; but I soon found my error. . . . The chairman of the committee, steps up to the White House, and there receives from the President or the Secretary of the Treasury, such bills as they wish to have passed by the House. The chairman puts the bills in his pocket, takes them to the committee; without any examination the majority of the committee approve them; the minority can do nothing; the bills are presented to the House, and received as the doings of the committee.

According to Fletcher, every important bill which had been passed by Congress during the extra session was framed by others than its members. Representatives had become machines for the use of the executive. "Executive power has become a very colossus, which bestrides the land from one end to the other; and, . . . if we do not overthrow it . . . it will crush liberty . . . the Constitution!"³³ This speech was reported in the

³³ *Speech of Robert Fletcher*, Fanueil Hall, November 6, 1837. Pamphlet. Library of Congress. Fletcher was a minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Boston Atlas, copied in part by *Niles' Register*,³⁴ and printed as a campaign pamphlet which was given wide circulation.³⁵ Not long after the opening of the regular session in December, 1837, the majority members of the committee published a reply to Fletcher in the *Washington Globe*, in which its chairman, C. C. Cambreling, declared that he had received no bills from the President nor had he consulted with him, but that in accordance with the practice since the beginning of the government he had consulted with the heads of the departments. "This is but an act of courtesy to the officer who recommends a measure connected with the business of his department, and whose duty it is, when the law is enacted, to construe and execute it." Bills often appeared before the committee in this way, but it was denied that they were accepted in their original form as Fletcher had charged.³⁶ Instead of maintaining his position, Fletcher in a weak speech denied that the *Atlas* had reported him correctly. He had not intended, he declared, to launch a personal attack upon the Democratic members and had wished merely to criticize the majority members for con-

³⁴ *Niles' Register*, LIII. 199. It also appeared in the *National Intelligencer*, January 2, 1838.

³⁵ C. G. Atherton, a Democratic member of the committee, from New Hampshire, wrote to the editor of *New Hampshire Patriot* December, 1837, that Fletcher's speech had been printed in nearly all of the Whig newspapers of that state and that large numbers of the pamphlets had been distributed there. *Niles' Register*, LIII. 315.

³⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 25 Congress, 2 Session, p. 21.

sulting with the heads of departments without the knowledge of the minority.³⁷ The affair at once attracted wide attention,³⁸ but the uncertain position taken by Fletcher gave his Whig colleagues an excuse to leave him to his own resources. The *New York American* was convinced of Fletcher's sincerity in his controversy with the *Atlas*, but declared that in his defence he had not been "sufficiently clear and explicit, either as to what he meant to admit, or to deny." He had "disavowed statements, which, nevertheless, he had permitted to be circulated as true," with the result that members of the House who otherwise would have hastened to his defence "could not sustain one, who seemed unfaithful to himself."³⁹ Fletcher withdrew from the committee and thereafter ceased to play an important part in Congress. In March, 1838, Adams noted that Fletcher "since his caucus speech in Faneuil Hall and his faltering defence of it in the House, is a cipher, and will drop from his seat or decline a reelection."⁴⁰ Whig leaders preferred to limit themselves to a

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁸ *National Intelligencer*, January 2, 3, 1838. Cf. *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 3, quoting *New York Courier and Enquirer*; January 4, quoting *Portsmouth Gazette* and *Salem Advertiser*. *Boston Atlas*, December 18, 1837. *Niles' Register*, LIII. 119.

³⁹ *New York American*, January 2, 1838.

⁴⁰ Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 503. In July, 1839, the *Intelligencer* announced Fletcher's resignation after he had been reelected. He had doubtless "found the arena of the House of Representatives too crowded and boisterous for his retired and deliberative habits." *National Intelligencer*, July 6, 1839. He was later a member of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, 1848-1853.

criticism of executive encroachment in general terms rather than to support Fletcher's definite issue.

Common interests of more fundamental importance than campaign arguments were present in the Whig party. With some exceptions, notably that of the group which gained control of the party in 1839-1840, it expressed in many ways the conservative point of view in politics. Men who were conservative by temperament either abandoned politics altogether or were Whigs.⁴¹ They viewed with alarm evidences of social disorder and waxed pessimistic as to the future stability of society. The bitterness of partisan struggles during the Jacksonian period resulted in numerous riots, particularly on election days. Street fighting occurred in New York City, Albany, and Philadelphia during the municipal elections of 1834. In September, 1835, Niles declared:

Society seems everywhere unhinged, and the demon of 'blood and slaughter' has been let loose upon us . . . and [I] regret to believe also that an awful political outcry is to be raised to rally the 'poor against the rich'. . . . The character of our countrymen seems suddenly changed, and thousands interpret the laws in their own way—sometimes in one case, and then in another guided only by their own will.⁴²

⁴¹ M. Chevalier, *Society, Manners and Politics in the United States* (Boston, 1839), p. 438.

⁴² *Niles' Register*, XLIX. 1.

When Adams was asked at this time to sign a petition for the abolition of capital punishment, he saw in it evidence of a declining respect for law. "The signs of the times are portentous. All the tendencies of legislation are to the removal of restrictions from the vicious and the guilty, and to the exercise of all the powers of government . . . by lawless assemblages of individuals." He anticipated with distinct aversion the abolition of the death penalty not only in Massachusetts but in all states.⁴³ Chevalier noted the resemblance between the Democratic speeches against the Bank and "our Republican tirades of 1791 and 1792. There is the same declamatory tone, the same swollen style, the same appeal to popular passions. . . ." The opposition of Whigs to these tendencies and to the Democratic party, which was charged with the responsibility for this state of affairs, was a natural result of their property interests. This was especially true of the party in the eastern states. According to Congdon, the Massachusetts Whigs "claimed all the decency, refinement, wealth and cultivation of the State, if not of the United States."⁴⁴ In Maine, business men were reported to have discharged employees who opposed the Bank, and one declared that he always gave preference to men who voted for what he thought were the best

⁴³ Adams, *Memoirs*, IX. 259, 260.

⁴⁴ Congdon, *Reminiscences*, p. 60.

interests of the country.⁴⁵ Few of the wealthier merchants of New York City belonged to the Democratic party. "The mass of large and little merchants have, like a flock of sheep, gathered either in the Federalist, Whig, Clay or Republican folds. The Democratic merchants could have easily been stored in a large Eighth Avenue railroad car."⁴⁶ The *Intelligencer* commented upon the economic character of the Whig party in New York state on the eve of the election in November, 1834. "That a very large proportion of all the voters in New York, who have any stake in the national prosperity, or who have an essential interest in the perpetuation of our political institutions or indeed in the preservation of social order, are now numbered among the Whigs, is a fact which cannot be controverted."⁴⁷ Even Whig politicians conceded that the two parties were distinguished by this difference. Seward wrote to Weed in April, 1835, that Van Buren could not be defeated.

The people are for him. Not so much for him as for the principle they suppose he represents. That principle is Democracy; . . . It is with them, the poor against the rich; and it is not to be disguised, that, since the last election, the array of parties has very strongly taken that character. Those who felt themselves or believed themselves poor, have fallen off very naturally from us, and

⁴⁵ Hatch, *History of Maine*, I. 217.

⁴⁶ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, p. 426, quoting W. Barrett, *Old Merchants of New York*, I. 81.

⁴⁷ *National Intelligencer*, November 3, 1834.

into the majority . . . while 'the rich *we* have always with us'. Our papers without being conscious of it, have been gradually assuming their cause; not from choice, but by way of retaliation upon the victors.⁴⁸

While the western Whigs were probably less prosperous than their eastern associates, their point of view in politics was doubtless similar. National Republicans and Whigs, in migrating to the new country, inevitably took with them their political opinions, and the levelling influences of the frontier could not in all cases overcome temperament and family traditions. During the Jacksonian period the Whig party in the South had every reason to be sympathetic with the conservative point of view. It included, with few exceptions, the slave-holding aristocracy owning large plantations and numerous slaves.⁴⁹ These men turned instinctively to an association with

⁴⁸ Seward to Weed, Auburn, April 12, 1835. Seward, *Autobiography*, pp. 257-258. The earlier struggle between Jackson and the Bank naturally forced men of property interests into opposition. In April, 1834, Niles recognized one hundred and eighty-three names of business houses that had signed a petition in Baltimore urging the return of the deposits. *Niles' Register*, XLVI. p. 244. James Buchanan wrote to Jackson from a Pennsylvania watering place in July, 1837: "It is mortifying to observe what a powerful influence the Bank of the United States exerts over the minds of those who consider themselves the well born and well bred of the land. At this watering place, there are but few who are not its advocates and who would not hail its recharter by Congress as a sovereign panacea for all our political evils. . . . It is among the hard handed and honest farmers and mechanics of the country that the opposition to this institution and to a monied aristocracy prevails." Buchanan to Jackson, Bedford Springs, July 28, 1837. *Works of Buchanan* (J. B. Moore, ed., Philadelphia, 1908), III. 256, 257.

⁴⁹ Cole, *Whig Party in the South*, pp. 69-72.

men of similarly conservative interests in the North. A correspondent of the *Intelligencer*, writing in November, 1838, urged the advantages of acting with the northern Whigs.

The security of the South is in the Northern Whigs, for they are the defenders of society as it is, under the Constitution. They are the Conservatives in opposition to the destructive principle of Locofocoism, which is for levelling everything, amalgamating everything. They are men who have a stake in society, and tremble over convulsions. If the South now sows the Locofoco wind in the North it will reap the whirlwind. . . . Law, law, law, is the call of the Whigs."⁵⁰

While the Whigs were influenced in their political thinking by property interests, available evidence does not support the theory that they differed with the Democrats in the ownership of personal in contrast with real property. Professor Fox has demonstrated, however, that the wards of New York City showing the largest assessments returned consistent majorities for the National Republican and Whig parties, and a similar conclusion was established in regard to several of the smaller cities.⁵¹ The county returns for the national elections also show that the Whigs were usually more successful in developed regions.⁵² Committed to this narrow interest, the party depended upon adventitious circumstances to give it a more effective appeal to the mass of voters.

⁵⁰ *National Intelligencer*, November 21, 1838.

⁵¹ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, p. 424, 433-435.

⁵² See appendix for election maps.

The pressure of disturbed economic conditions was felt by men who had little or no property. After wages fell unemployment increased, and markets for farm products were injured. Hard times were, therefore, the most persuasive arguments for the Whig party. Seward acknowledged that "this party of ours in its elements is such that it cannot succeed until there is a time of popular convulsion, when suffering shall make men feel, and because they feel, think!"⁵³ This proved to be true in the years of the greatest Whig activity, in 1834 and after 1837. The obvious association between hard times and the success of the party tempted those who had a material interest at stake to create or to emphasize existing depression. This was done by Biddle and the Bank in the spring and summer of 1834.⁵⁴

Something may be learned of the character of the Whig party from the comments of its leaders in regard to their opponents. Its point of view was that of an almost hopeless minority. It was Chevalier's observation that, "The higher classes in the United States, with some exceptions and taken as a whole, have the air and attitude of the vanquished; they bear the mark of defeat on their front."⁵⁵ The long tenure of power in Democratic hands changed the emphasis in political life

⁵³ Seward to Weed, April 12, 1835. Seward, *Autobiography*, p. 258.

⁵⁴ See above, pp. 120, 121.

⁵⁵ Chevalier, *Society, Manners and Politics*, p. 438.

from the professional and business groups to the small farmer and laborer. Sir Charles Lyell, the English geologist, who travelled in the United States in 1845, was told by many merchants:

that the small farmers had too great an ascendancy. No feature, indeed, appeared to me more contrasted in the political aspect of America and Great Britain than this, that in the United States the democracy derives its chief support from the landed interest, while the towns take the more conservative side, and are often accused by the landed proprietors of being too aristocratic.⁵⁶

While Lyell's explanation of American politics cannot be substantiated in detail, it indicated a situation which nevertheless existed. Another traveller, Alexander Mackay, who came to this country in 1846-1847 but whose observations were doubtless equally valid for the earlier period, noted the important part played by the farmer in politics. Debarred by the limitations of his environment from the accumulation of considerable wealth, he satisfied his ambitions in political life. Local offices were almost entirely in his control.

⁵⁶ Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States* (N. Y., 1849), I. 84-85. Chevalier wrote that the opinion of the educated or upper classes had influenced all presidents down to Jackson and had been effective in some measure in controlling Congress. "Aujourd'hui elle a complètement rompu avec le Président. . . . Aujourd'hui elle n'a plus de crédit que près d'une seule des Chambres, parce que le Sénat se trouve encore composé d'hommes, qu'elle peut revendiquer comme siens à cause de leur supériorité de lumières, d'éducation ou de fortune . . . Le *farmer* et le *mechanic* sont les seigneurs du Nouveau-Monde: l'opinion publique, c'est *leur* volonté . . . le Président est *leur* élu, *leur* mandataire; *leur* seigneur . . . En un mot, l'Amérique du Nord, c'est l'Europe la tête en bas et les pieds en haut." Chevalier, *Letters sur l'Amérique*, pp. 313, 314.

Once involved in politics, his vote and influence became of such importance that he could not withdraw, and his interests naturally expanded from the township to county and state affairs. Wherever Mackay went he found that the farmer "as a duck takes to water, so does he very soon take to politics," and, moreover, he was usually well informed on political matters. "I found the farmers in the remotest districts, not all equally, but all tolerably conversant, each man being able to assign an intelligent reason for the side he took and the vote which he gave."⁵⁷ Lyell believed that the effect of the Democratic appeal to the artisans of the towns and cities had made it difficult if not impossible for men of wealth to achieve success in politics.

During my subsequent stay in New England, I often conversed with men of the working classes on the same subject and invariably found that they had made up their mind that it was not desirable to choose representatives from the wealthiest class. 'The rich,' they say 'have less sympathy with our opinions and feelings; love their amusements, and go shooting, fishing, and traveling; keep hospitable houses, and are inaccessible when we want to talk with them, at all hours, and tell them *how we wish them to vote.*'"

It was his conclusion that discrimination against men of wealth in politics was the result of "the desire of reducing their legislature to mere delegates." Furthermore, Lyell was informed by a

⁵⁷ Alexander Mackay, *The Western World* (London, 1850), II. 6-12.

lawyer, who was probably unsympathetic with contemporary changes of a democratic character: "In choosing a delegate—the people consider themselves as patrons who are giving away a place; and if an opulent man offers himself, they are disposed to say, 'You have enough already, let us help some one as good as you who is poor.'"⁵⁸

Travellers' opinions are usually more sweeping than accurate in detail, but in this case they provide evidence of a condition which existed in the western or frontier states and in the larger cities. The Whig point of view was probably influenced by this situation. Fear was commonly expressed that the control of the government had passed into incapable or dangerous hands. The New Haven *Palladium* was alarmed by the character of the Democratic party in the New York election of November, 1834.

The Tories reaped their harvest and secured all the votes of all those who were termed the greatest democrats because the most worthless vagabonds. In their view, the respectable journeyman mechanic is a ruffleshirt and an aristocrat, compared with those whose home is neither 'on the mountain wave', nor at the mechanic's bench, but in the gutters and watch-houses of the city—those who instead of attending church or reading at home are singing 'Yankee Doodle' on Sundays at Tammany Hall and ridiculing the Scriptures.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I. 83.

⁵⁹ *National Intelligencer*, November 19, 1834.

The Whigs of New York City agreed with the Native Americans in their support of stringent requirements for the naturalization of immigrants as a means of keeping out dangerous elements,⁶⁰ and the two parties coöperated in several of the municipal elections.⁶¹ The *New York American* declared that it was not a party question and that it was to the interest of all to amend the federal constitution in order to "withhold from all men of foreign birth, who may hereafter be naturalized, all political rights."⁶² Nevertheless, as most of the immigrants became Democrats under the able management of party leaders,⁶³ their exclusion from the franchise would weaken that party and thereby serve Whig interests. Whig resistance to liberal naturalization laws was of course centered in New York, where the problem was most acute, but Joseph Duncan, a Democratic member from Illinois, arraigned the party as a whole for its attitude upon this issue.⁶⁴

Fear of increasing radicalism was in some degree justified by the appearance of the Locofoco

⁶⁰ L. L. Scisco, *Political Nativism in New York* (N. Y., 1901), p. 23.

⁶¹ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, pp. 375, 376.

⁶² *New York American* (semi-weekly), July 30, 1835. Cf. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1835.

⁶³ Hone, *Diary*, I. 168. Cf. A. B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States* (N. Y., 1909), II. 126, 127.

⁶⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 26 Congress, 2 Session, pp. 266-273. This speech is analysed in F. G. Franklin, *The Legislative History of Naturalization in the United States, from the Revolution to 1861*. (Chicago, 1906), pp. 207-211.

party in New York City as the result of division in the Democratic ranks in October, 1835. This party soon made common cause with the struggling trade union movement in resistance to any and all bank charters, in support of an exclusively gold and silver currency, the extension of the common school system, and the election of all members of the judiciary. The Whigs of New York noted with approval evidence of conservatism among the majority of the Democratic party,⁶⁵ but this satisfaction was short lived, for the Locofocos returned to their former allegiance in the fall of 1837 as a result of Van Buren's recommendation of a divorce between the government and the pet banks.⁶⁶ Already aroused by the vagaries of the radical Fanny Wright, who had been lecturing in New York City,⁶⁷ Whigs now declared that the Democratic party was infected with the dangerous theories of the Locofocos. Whig newspapers replied to the charge of Federalism with the assertion that the Democrats were Locofocos, and the significance of this

⁶⁵ F. Byrdsall, *The History of the Loco Foco, or Equal Rights Party* (N. Y., 1842), pp. 28-29.

⁶⁶ William Trimble, "Diverging Tendencies in the New York Democracy in the Period of the Locofocos," *American Historical Review*, XXIV, 410-412.

⁶⁷ The New York correspondent of the *Intelligencer* assured his readers that her activities were a part of the Locofoco campaign. "Fanny Wright is now lecturing on equal rights in our city. I dropt in (six cents it is) to hear her last night. Man is equal, woman is equal, down with banks, down with priests, down with religion, down with everything, was the sum of her oration." *National Intelligencer*, October 15, 1837.

name lies in their interpretation of that movement. A Locofoco was defined in a clipping printed by the *Intelligencer* in September, 1837, as a person who wished to destroy existing social institutions.

A Loco Foco in the present acceptation of the term, is a man not satisfied with anything that exists; but is in favor of an equal distribution of property, an uprooting of the institutions of the country, and the substitution of some monstrous and impracticable fancy of his own in their stead. He professes to be in favor of 'Equal Rights, Equal Privileges, and Equal Laws', by which he means rights, privileges, and laws, which will make him as rich, as influential, and as consequential as his more industrious, prudent, able, persevering and thriving neighbors, without any particular talents or exertions of his own. A Loco Foco wants a new Constitution; he desires that there should be no credits; that all debts should be debts of honor; that no man should be superior to himself; that we should have no medium of exchanges but gold and silver; that the whole form of society and government should be changed, and that they should have the privilege of concocting a better. He is a restless, unsatisfied mortal; and could he have all his heart's desire today, he would grumble tomorrow just as lustily as ever.⁶⁸

The *Intelligencer's* New York correspondent wrote a few days later that if the Locofocos were allowed to return to Tammany "a terrible war is to commence in all this great country between European Radicalism of the worst kind and American Conservatism. . . ." He anticipated that the Democrats would lose control of New

⁶⁸ *National Intelligencer*, September 9, 1837, quoting *New York Observer* of Utica.

York state if this occurred, "for the rich and powerful men of Tammany have made Mr. Van Buren all he is . . . and if he drives them further, they will turn upon him in wrath." Should the President follow Silas Wright's example in drawing the line of "the poor against the rich," his defeat will be turned into a rout, for the Democratic party in New York state was made up of the "very rich and the very poor, acting against the middle interests, and whenever he draws off either section, he is in a great minority."⁶⁹ Moderation was of course a characteristic of the remarks of neither party in regard to its opponents, and according to J. S. Buckingham, an English traveller who was in New York state during the fall election of 1838, Whig characterizations of Democrats were especially vivid. They were "atheists, infidels, agrarians, incendiaries, men who were without religion and honesty, who desire to pull down all that was venerable in the institutions of the country, to seize the property of the rich and divide it among the poor, to demolish the churches. . . ."⁷⁰ In January, 1838, the *New York Express* described a crowd of Locofocos that attempted to break up a meeting of conservative Democrats as, "The Slam Bang fellows, and odds and ends of this big earth, agrarians and Fannie Wright men in scores

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, September 13, 1837.

⁷⁰ J. S. Buckingham, *America, Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive* (London, 1841), I. 68.

. . . began to assemble . . . with wild, fierce, squally looks betokening the coming storm." The Democrats who still remained true to conservative principles, it was hoped, would see "that it is not with such a Buffalo herd government is to be administered . . . or victory won." If this "clan" should succeed in gaining control, it would introduce "violence, mobism, force, terror, all the anarchy and Jacobinism of the French Robespierrians. . . ." ⁷¹ According to the *New York American* in November, 1838, the *Evening Post*, an important Democratic newspaper, printed and endorsed the address of a Locofoco meeting in which the dangers of a social upheaval were minimized. "'Nor has our country any reason to fear *social disorder*. *Anarchy is but a state of transition*. The very nature of man renders social order inevitable.' " ⁷² There was danger, however, that this conservative attitude would be pushed too far. As a means of demonstrating that they were not without sympathy for the poor, the Whigs of New York City, after the successful election of 1837, collected a considerable purse for the purpose of relieving their needs, and it was said that the same thing was to be done in Philadelphia. "This is the party, who are called 'haters of the poor'—'aristocrats'—'rag-barons'—'bank partisans'—'oppressors of the poor'. . . ." ⁷³

⁷¹ *New York American*, January 3, 1838, quoting *New York Express*.

⁷² *National Intelligencer*, November 3, 1838.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, November 22, 1837.

The presidential message of December, 1838, in alluding to the " 'Anti-Republican tendencies of associated wealth' " was interpreted by Whigs as containing the germs of the most dangerous of radical theories. It was conceded that Van Buren perhaps intended to refer to "banking, insurance, and manufacturing companies only," but he had given expression to a heresy which in its logical conclusion would "stigmatise as unnatural and anti-republican all notions of property, all contracts, all obligations of every sort."⁷⁴ An article on "Radicalism" in the *Democratic Review* for October, 1838, was taken as representative of the administration's point of view. The opinions expressed therein were in fact tolerant of radicalism in general and of Locofocoism in particular. The writer asked that justice be done them. Their doctrines "are generally sound, and their practice, with perhaps slight exceptions, would make the world happier and better."⁷⁵ This position apparently contained little of a revolutionary character, but the *Intelligencer* immediately declared that it was proof that the Democrats intended to make the "rich poor and the poor rich, by reducing to harmony the laws of nature, which they alleged to have been violated by artificial and unjust distributions of property. . . ." This open profession of agra-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, December 8, 1838.

⁷⁵ *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, III. 105, 106.

rian principles was the climax of folly as well as of political error. "If put into practice they would break up the great deep of civil society."⁷⁶ In August, 1840, the *Intelligencer* pointed to the efforts made by the Democratic members of the Senate to change the tenure of the judiciary as an example of their radicalism. It was first proposed by Senator Tappan, "this trusty counsellor of the President," in December, 1838, to limit members of the federal judiciary to periods ranging from one to seven years, and later it was proposed by another Democratic senator to make these offices elective. The *Democratic Review*, it declared, went even to greater extremes by urging a term of one year with unlimited re-eligibility for the presidency and also the change from an appointive to an elective provision for most of the offices in the executive department.⁷⁷ It is possible that the forebodings of Whig newspapers as to the dangers of Democratic radicalism were not entirely sincere; in any case, it was expedient to stress the union between the Democratic party and Locofocoism. To the charge that they were the successors of the old Federalists, the Whigs replied that the Democrats were Locofocos.

The radical views of Orestes A. Brownson, editor of the *Boston Quarterly Review*, furnished the Whigs another opportunity to attribute un-

⁷⁶ *National Intelligencer*, November 14, 1838.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1840.

sound principles to the administration. Brownson was an eccentric who established the *Review* in 1838 as a means of expressing his ideas without any constraint. "I undertake this *Review* . . . for myself," he declared in the first number, "not because I am certain that the public wants it, but because I want it. I want it as a medium through which I may say to those who choose to listen to my voice, just what I wish to say, and through which I may say it in my own way and time. . . ." ⁷⁸ He was in hearty sympathy with the Chartist movement, and in an article on this subject not only did he encourage the leaders of the English movement, but he also expressed advanced ideas as to the existing economic system in the United States.

The only enemy of the Laborer, is your employer, whether he appear in the shape of a master mechanic, or in the owner of a factory . . . we say frankly, that, if there must always be a laboring population distinct from proprietors and employers we regard the slave system as decidedly preferable to the system at wages. ⁷⁹

Brownson insisted that he was a member of no party, but the *Intelligencer* in August, 1840, identified him as a federal office-holder and moreover asserted that he was the recipient of a comfortable salary for a slight return in service. The New York *Evening Post*, which was said to be

⁷⁸ *Boston Quarterly Review*, I. 4.

⁷⁹ These statements were quoted by a Whig pamphlet written, under a pseudonym, by Calvin Colton. "Junius," *American Jacobinism* (N. Y., 1840). Library of Congress.

close to the administration, was sympathetic in its attitude and had virtually endorsed his position. Its remarks in reference to radicalism were especially offensive from the *Intelligencer's* point of view. The *Post* thought that society resented too quickly new ideas that questioned its "ancient habits and established modes of faith." Radicals are "what the spur is to the sluggish steed. They break in upon its heavy slumbers . . . and impel it more quickly in the career of improvement. . . . The curse of human action is, that it moves too slow, is reluctant to break its accustomed routine, and thus goes on for ages under abuses which a year might correct."⁸⁰ While the *Intelligencer* attributed the administration's tolerance of Brownson to a desire for the radical vote, Calvin Colton interpreted the *Post's* position as evidence of the Democratic party's approval of his ideas.⁸¹ In fact, when the *Boston Quarterly Review* came to the end of its brief career in 1840 it was merged with the *Democratic Review*, a demonstration that the administration was not unfriendly.

The federal government under the control of the Democratic party, according to Whig opinion, had turned towards radical democracy. Thomas Hamilton, an English traveller with democratic sympathies whose remarks on America were published in 1833, reported that all intelligent men

⁸⁰ *National Intelligencer*, August 11, 1840.

⁸¹ Junius, *American Jacobinism*, p. 1.

with whom he had talked confessed that the spirit of the constitution had changed. "It was undoubtedly the wish of Washington and Hamilton to counterpoise, as much as circumstances would permit, the rashness of democracy by the caution and wisdom of an aristocracy of intelligence and wealth. There is now no attempt at counterpoise."⁸² Late in 1838, the *Boston Daily Advertiser* declared that "the distinction between a Republic and a Democracy has become dim," and that it was the policy of the Democratic party to change the character of the American government. "They have proclaimed by word and deed that 'our government is a Democracy'; until the difference between regarding and confounding the distinction had become the difference between the Whigs and their opponents."⁸³ Such was the point of view taken by Calvin Colton in a pamphlet written for the purpose of correcting some of the mistaken ideas for which British travellers were responsible. "American society," he declared, "has manifested two leading and opposite tendencies; one towards the lowest level of democracy, and the other towards a spiritual supremacy." He had no patience with the natural rights theorists, and asserted that the use of "liberty" in the Declaration of Independence

⁸² Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (London, 1833), I. 298, 299.

⁸³ *National Intelligencer*, January 8, 1839, quoting *Boston Daily Advertiser*.

meant only "representation and influence in the government." Advancement in civilization was necessarily accompanied by increasing restrictions upon liberty. Only the savage enjoys perfect liberty. "Who, then, has liberty? and where is it to be found? Who desires it? None, but the vicious—none but the enemy of society." Equality, he declared, merely meant the abolition of monarchy and titles. A decisive struggle was taking place in America between "a Constitutional republic, as originally set up, and a radical democracy. The storm of radicalism has been gathering and lowering in the American sky for an age, while the helm of the ship of State has, for the most part, been in its hands."⁸⁴

Brownson thought that in all organized society there is a natural division between two parties. One, composed of men who are benefited by existing institutions, is accordingly opposed to change; the other, deriving its strength from those who bear the burdens of society, is the party of movement and change.⁸⁵ Colton saw in the conflict between American political parties a struggle between those who wished to keep political institutions as they were and men of radical ideas. Substantially the same conclusion was expressed by foreign travellers who paid any attention to American politics. While they were

⁸⁴ *A Voice from America to England, by an American Gentleman* (London, 1839).

⁸⁵ *Boston Quarterly Review*, I. 123-125.

agreed in general that there existed no differences of opinion as to the forms of government, they saw in the clash between Whigs and Democrats the same differences that distinguished conservatives from liberals or radicals everywhere. As they saw it, this distinction was universal and inevitable in politics,⁸⁶ and as they were accustomed to party divisions of this character in the politics of their own country, perhaps their study of American political conditions was not entirely impartial. They were much impressed by the similarity between American parties and those of Europe. De Tocqueville was of the opinion that beneath a superficial influence of party leaders and of opportune issues, there were more fundamental characteristics. "The deeper we penetrate into the inmost thought of these parties, the more do we perceive that the object of the one is to limit, and the other to extend, the authority of the people."⁸⁷ Thomas Hamilton, having supported the Reform Act of 1832, for this reason found himself "quite as much a Radical in Boston and very nearly so in New York, as I had been considered in England. It was soon apparent that the great majority of the enlightened classes in both cities, regarded any great and sudden change

⁸⁶ De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I. 223. Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* (London, 1837), I. 10-44. Hamilton, *Men and Manners*, I. 288. Frederick von R  umer, *America and the American People* (N. Y., 1846), pp. 270 ff. R  umer was a professor in the University of Berlin.

⁸⁷ De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I. 226, 227.

in British institutions as pregnant with the most imminent danger.”⁸⁸ A lecture tour in 1837 that took him into all parts of the country gave J. S. Buckingham an exceptional opportunity for the study of American parties, and it is suggestive that he also noticed the unsympathetic attitude of the Whigs towards the liberal movement in England.

They are nearly all in favor of giving wealth a more open and direct influence than it now possesses, in the suffrage for elections, and would be glad to exclude from the electoral body all who have not some fixed amount of property. They are against any changes that would increase the power or influence of the people. . . . They sympathize almost universally with the Tory party in England; they think that even Lord Grey carried the principles of reform too far, and would be glad to see the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel restored to office. . . . Nearly all the rich capitalists and merchants belong to this party; the more wealthy tradesmen also adhere to it; while the Episcopal clergy, lawyers and the medical profession—in short, all who desire to rank with the aristocratical or genteel portion of society, either really entertain, or find it convenient to profess, Whig or conservative principles, and prefer the latter name to the former.⁸⁹

Harriet Martineau was told that the “‘grand question of the time was, whether the people should be encouraged to govern themselves, or whether the wise should save them from themselves.’”⁹⁰ Although an immigrant from Bo-

⁸⁸ Hamilton, *Men and Manners*, I. 244.

⁸⁹ Buckingham, *America*, I. 60.

⁹⁰ Martineau, *Society in America*, I. 22.

hemia rather than a traveller, F. J. Grund's long experience as a journalist in Philadelphia gave him exceptional opportunities for observing American politics. He was, however, Democratic in his sympathies, and therefore his assertion of the essential continuity between the Federalist, National Republican, and the Whig parties is not of much value. It was his opinion that the Whigs wished to confide "power to the comparative few, and to deprive the masses of the privilege of voting. They take it as a political maxim that the people are unable to govern themselves, because the people are never sufficiently enlightened for that purpose."⁹¹ The opinions of J. R. Godley were formed as a result of travels in 1844, but they were doubtless applicable to the conditions of the earlier period. "There is a greater anxiety," he declared, "for the preservation of order and tranquillity felt by the Whigs than by their opponents; as being, generally speaking, a more 'substantial' class of men . . . they are more cautious but less consistent. . . ."⁹² Räumler was told by Whigs that behind differences upon specific political questions "lie hidden . . . greater dangers, which without constant effort on our part would burst forth and involve us all in ruin. The locofocos might finally subject all laws

⁹¹ F. J. Grund, *The Americans in their Moral, Social and Political Relations* (Boston, 1837), p. 407. Grund was educated in Vienna and had taught in Brazil before coming to America in 1826.

⁹² Godley, *Letters from America* (London, 1844), II. 110.

to popular license, and abolish the right of property. We Whigs are the conservative class; our opponents the destructive.' ”⁹³

Whigs were not averse to expressing the conservative point of view upon occasions that did not commit the party upon questions of national importance. In reply to the doctrines of class warfare advocated by Fanny Wright and Brownson, the essential solidarity of the entire population was insisted upon. This was the intent of a resolution adopted by a Whig meeting in Philadelphia:

That the interests of every class of society are so intimately blended in this country, where with few exceptions, every rich man has once been poor, and where there is scarcely a poor man who may not reasonably hope to become rich, that no policy of the Government can operate to the injury or benefit of any class, without affecting all others in a similar way.⁹⁴

The *Intelligencer* declared in September, 1834, that in the more advanced sections of Maine, which were “accessible to frequent mails and free communication” the Whigs were gaining in strength.⁹⁵ More definite statements of the attitude of the Whigs towards conservatism were made with reference to the question of coöperating with those Democrats who had left their party

⁹³ Räumler, *America*, p. 270. Mackay wrote that “the Whigs are justly regarded as the conservative, the Democratic as the ‘go-ahead’ party.” Mackay, *Western World*, p. 16.

⁹⁴ *National Intelligencer*, November 24, 1837.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, September 17, 1834.

over the independent treasury issue and who were therefore called the Conservatives. One section of Whig opinion, represented by the *New York American*, refused to have anything to do with men who had been the associates of orthodox Democrats. However, not all were agreed in this unreceptive attitude. The *New York Gazette* declared that "we are willing to identify ourselves with Conservatism . . . all we ask of the honest politicians of all parties is, to join with us, or permit us to join with them, in exercising a conservatism that shall perpetuate our institutions."⁹⁶ The *Gazette* later was even more definite. "The truth is, conservatism is the principle element of which our party is composed, and when we find that feeling it should be cherished."⁹⁷ True to their point of view, Whigs looked askance at the struggling labor movement. It was sharply condemned in 1838 by the *New York Review*,⁹⁸ in an article that won the approval of the *American*. The *Review's* article had been "unanswerable in the indications of the injury from all such unions to the parties that constitute them, and to the general interests of the community; they are traced also to a foreign origin, and from sources whence Americans should have disdained to seek instructions."⁹⁹ When the courts decided

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1839.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 18, 1839.

⁹⁸ "Trade Unions," *New York Review*, II. 1-48.

⁹⁹ *New York American*, January 6, 1838.

in 1835 in accordance with the old English law that unions were conspiracies in restraint of trade, Whig newspapers gave their approval.¹⁰⁰ The diary of Philip Hone throws much light upon the reactions to contemporary problems and events of a conservative whose interest in politics was distinctly amateurish. Even Whig meetings arranged especially to attract the wage earner were distinguished, according to Hone, by their moderate and correct attitude. One he described as "consisting principally of the most respectable mechanics . . . men of character, respectability and personal worth."¹⁰¹ In a similar description the writer unconsciously revealed something of his own personality: "the great, the sublime, the intelligent mass separated and retired with decorum and dignity. Such an assembly was never before seen in New York . . . a solid mass of faces beaming with intelligence, actuated by one strong feeling, silent, attentive, decorous. . . ."¹⁰² Some of his unctuousness perhaps came from personal knowledge of the rough and boisterous Democratic rallies that attracted much attention in the Whig press.

Leaders of the National Republican and Whig parties and considerable groups of their members were agreed in a broad conception of the powers of the federal government, except for

¹⁰⁰ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, pp. 390, 391.

¹⁰¹ Hone, *Diary*, I. 91.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, I. 93.

their passing objection to the growth of presidential authority, and usually in a more ambitious national policy than that which the Democrats approved. John Quincy Adams conceived during his administration a far-reaching scheme for educational and internal development. In February, 1837, he wrote that "The great effort of my administration was to mature into a permanent and regular system the application of all the surplus revenue of the Union to internal improvement which at this day would have afforded high wages and constant employment to hundreds of thousands of labourers."¹⁰³ He had intended, so he declared in an address to his constituents in 1842, to use the public lands as a source of income for this purpose and also for a national development of education.¹⁰⁴ After Adams' elimination as a leader of his party, the tradition of a latitudinarian policy was carried on, particularly by

¹⁰³ Adams to C. W. Upshaw, Washington, February 2, 1837. Adams, *Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, pp. 24, 25.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28. In 1832 Clay discarded Adams' plan of using the proceeds from the sale of the public lands for these purposes. An opportunity was seen to strengthen the case for the protective tariff by distributing the surplus revenue among the states. Jackson failed to sign an act for this purpose, and in December, 1833, explained his action on the ground that it would lead to undesirable centralization. The Democratic party favored the sale of the public lands at prices that would meet the costs of administration, and therefore there would be no revenue to divide. At first the distribution was largely a sectional issue in that it was supported by the eastern states as a means of securing a share in the benefits of the public land; in 1841 it was openly recognized as a policy of the Whig administration and coupled with a new preëemption measure in order to conciliate the West, it became a law. Hibbard, *Public Land Policies*, pp. 173-187.

Webster and his friends. Their attitude was expressed by H. A. Dearborn, a Massachusetts Whig.

The grand, the fixed, the only true policy of this Republic is, to encourage national production, in all its numerous departments, and extend the lines of intercommunication over the whole country. Nations must not act like individuals. . . . The former must make the income commensurate with the necessary expenditures. It must promote intelligence and industry and therefore must establish schools and seminaries of learning and construct roads, canals and harbours. The question is not, have we the means in hand to do all this, but is this, should it be done, and if so, the means must be obtained, the money must be raised.¹⁰⁵

A storm of protest arose among Whigs in September, 1837, when Van Buren declared in his message to Congress that people "looked to the government for too much." The *Intelligencer* interpreted the administration's position to the effect that "government cannot interfere too little with the pursuits of the people."¹⁰⁶ Clay replied to this position in the Senate: "We are all, people, States, Union and banks, bound up and interwoven together, united in fortune and destiny, and all entitled to the protecting care of a paternal government."¹⁰⁷ Although Van Buren's declaration was originally made with reference to the possibility that legislation would improve the eco-

¹⁰⁵ Dearborn to Webster, Boston, March 18, 1840. Van Tyne, Webster Transcripts.

¹⁰⁶ *National Intelligencer*, February 27, 1838.

¹⁰⁷ Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, II. 20.

nomie situation, and was therefore justified to a considerable degree, Whigs immediately attributed it to the indifference of Democratic office-holders to the sufferings of the people.

A frank acknowledgement of its conservative character and an explicit statement of nationalist policies would have given the Whig party a real unity which it in fact did not have, but this, from the point of view of practical politics, would have been fatal to its prospects of success. Considerable numbers scattered in all sections would have seceded from the party. The difficulties of the Whigs in this respect were illustrated in the position of Calhoun and his friends. After leaving the Democratic party as a result of his differences with Van Buren and as a consequence of the nullification controversy, Calhoun went over to the opposition, since it had the character of an alliance which would permit the retention of his sectional bias. Early in 1834 he was elated by the reflection that the conservative character of the northern wing was increasing southern strength in councils of the party. Thousands in the North, he declared, "now look to the South, not only for protection against the usurpation of the Executive, but also against the needy and corrupt in their own section. They begin to feel what I have long foreseen, that they have more to fear from their own people than we from our

slaves.”¹⁰⁸ Conservatism in social questions was therefore a bond between the northern Whigs and the Calhoun faction in the South. But as regards definite nationalist policies there was no agreement.¹⁰⁹ Rather than run the danger of a nationalist as presidential candidate in 1840 or of a leader with no definite principles and with a questionable record upon the slavery question Calhoun returned to the Democratic ranks in 1837.¹¹⁰ Political expediency required that causes of party dissension should be kept in the background. For this reason one after another of the ideas which had formerly been cherished were sacrificed.

The explanation of the inconsistent position of the Whig party is to be found in the changes in American politics caused by the advent of Jacksonian democracy. “Political influence,” Chevalier declared, “is, at present, entirely in the hands of the . . . [American democracy] as with us it is monopolized by the Middle classes.” The return to power of the upper and middle classes in the United States was impossible except as a re-

¹⁰⁸ Calhoun, to Duff Green, Fort Hill, July 27, 1837. Jameson, *Calhoun Correspondence*, pp. 374-377.

¹⁰⁹ In 1838 Calhoun wrote that his only hope was in the Democratic party. “As much as the party has strayed from the true principles and policy of the Republican party, I believe that our only recruiting ground is in their ranks. We can have no hopes from that of the Nationals, or Northern Whigs. Not only their acts, but their principles are opposed to us. They are consolidationists by profession. . . .” Calhoun to Darnall, Fort Hill, October 26, 1838. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

¹¹⁰ Calhoun to Duff Green, Fort Hill, July 27, 1837. *Ibid.*, pp. 374-377.

sult of accidental divisions in Democratic ranks "when they may rally to their standard a portion of the farmers and mechanics."¹¹¹ Public opinion, according to Colton, had placed a premium upon the semblance of democracy.

No political party can dispense with it. . . . Whatever their principles, radical or conservative, their best passport is democracy. Hence, under all the rapidly succeeding changes of party names, adopted and given, which have characterized the history of American politics, the radicals now stand, self-styled, democratic, and the conservatives cannot do without it, and are forced to assume the style of democratic republicans, democratic whigs¹¹²

Under these circumstances candidates were more than ever compelled to cater to popular prejudices. Marryat, who was aristocratic in his point of view, wrote that a candidate with whom he had been talking changed his coat before going out with him for fear of losing the election if he appeared in formal attire.

To be popular with the majority in America, to be a favorite with the people, you must first divest yourself of all freedom of opinion, you must throw off all dignity, you must shake hands and drink with every man you meet; you must be, in fact, slovenly and dirty, in your appearance, or you will be put down as an aristocrat.¹¹³

Although Hamilton was told that experience under Democratic rule had strengthened the con-

¹¹¹ Chevalier, *Society, Manners and Politics*, p. 399.

¹¹² Colton, *Voice from America*, p. 3.

¹¹³ Marryat, *Diary in America*, II. 69.

servatism of the Whigs, they dared not express this point of view when running for office.¹¹⁴

The increasing democratic character of politics resulted not only in setting aside Whig principles but also in the elevation of new men to leadership in the party. In New York the old aristocracy of birth and of landed proprietorship no longer occupied influential positions in politics by the campaign of 1840.¹¹⁵ Hone's diary in this connection expresses the reaction of a wealthy Whig to the new conditions. A Whig rally in October, 1838, chose David B. Ogden "that excellent old Whig," as its chairman, and Hone's reflections on this incident express his own resentment and that of men like him at the change that had taken place in the Whig party.

It is refreshing once in a while to see a relic of honest political principles . . . allowed to take a prominent part in public affairs. It is almost the only thing of its kind I have seen in relation to the coming election. I cannot recognize the name on either ticket of a leading Federalist or National Republican; they are permitted to work and pay money; they must bake the loaves and catch the fishes, but they get precious few for themselves.¹¹⁶

Hone wished in 1839 to secure the party's nomination for the state senate but was told by the politicians that "'I am a gentleman . . . and no gentleman can win'. . . If they are right

¹¹⁴ Hamilton, *Men and Manners*, I. 290.

¹¹⁵ Fox, *Decline of Aristocracy*, pp. 415, 416.

¹¹⁶ Hone, *Diary*, I. 328, 329.

in what they say, the party is not worth sustaining, better it would be that everything should go back to the dunghill of Democracy and let us see if something better may not spring from it."¹¹⁷

Men who had come into the party from the Anti-Masons or from the Democratic ranks, and others who were willing to change their methods and ideas to meet the needs of the new political conditions exercised a decisive influence in the campaign of 1840. They were convinced that a change of tactics was essential to a Whig success. Such was the opinion of Thurlow Weed as early as 1834.

Our party as at present organized, is doomed to fight merely to be beaten. . . . The longer we fight Jacksonianism with our present weapons, *the more it won't die!* The truth is, in all this part of the State, we are in the condition of the old federal party.¹¹⁸ The people are against us, and they won't change in our favor so long as the existing party lines are drawn. . . . With Clay, Webster, or Calhoun, or indeed any man identified with

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 384. However, his estimate was higher of the Whig members of Congress. In his opinion, Abbott Lawrence, a member of the House from Massachusetts, was "an amiable man, and a wise man, and a gentleman and thereby unsuited for the society of the Robespierres, and the Marats, and the Couthnons, who constitute the present majority of our modern Jacobin Club at Washington; and of such men as Abbot Lawrence the Whig party in that House is mainly constituted." *Ibid.*, II. 19.

¹¹⁸ The continuity of the Federalist, National Republican, and Whig parties is impossible of demonstration in detail. Niles cited numerous instances of Federalists joining the Democratic party. *Niles' Register*, XLIII. 71, 101. *Ibid.*, XLVI. 256, 266. But the similarity between the political ideas of these parties is sufficient demonstration that it is a fact.

the war against Jackson and in favor of the Bank, or the Bank's shadow, the game is up.¹¹⁹

The nomination of an old soldier whose home happened to be in a log cabin and whose opinions, if he had any, caused a minimum of dissension within the party was the visible evidence of the change which had taken place in the Whig party. In thus casting aside its older leaders and principles the party achieved a superficial unity and, riding upon the wave of an emotional campaign, won a temporary victory by sacrificing any attempt to maintain a consistent position.

¹¹⁹ Weed to Granger, Albany, November 23, (1834?) Granger MSS.

CONCLUSIONS

JACKSONIAN Democracy not only controlled the federal government in the period from 1828 to 1840 but it was also perhaps the most important influence in shaping the character of the opposition. The opposition's chief problem, whether as the National Republican or as the Whig party, was the determination of ways and means of regaining power. This period is, therefore, a unit in the history of the Whig party, in which it gradually, and in some measure against its will, underwent changes under the influence of the dominant Democracy. Old issues and methods were relegated to the background or changed to serve more effectively the party's needs. Old leaders were replaced by new men who had taken no conspicuous part in the past struggles with the democratic movement and who could therefore seek its support. It is the chief purpose of this study to trace the process by which the Whig party was shaped to suit the needs of the political situation.

The brief history of the National Republican party constitutes the first phase of the problem because the causes of its failure go far to explain the weakness of party which followed it. These

causes are to be found chiefly in the leadership of John Quincy Adams. Elected in 1824 with the aid of many of the country's ablest leaders, he failed to create a strong party during his administration. He displayed considerable skill as a politician in the negotiations prior to his election, but, once in office, he preferred a non-partisan policy and yielded with reluctance, and too late to have material results, to the requests of his associates for aid in the organization of a party. Most important of all was his lack of sympathy for and understanding of the political significance of the frontier. His defeat in 1828 eliminated him as the leader of the party.

In 1829 there was a possibility of defeating Jackson as the leader of the new democracy in the ensuing campaign without compromising too much the character of the National Republican party. Three problems required solution in order to attain this result: (1) organization without the aid of the patronage, (2) the nomination of the candidate who had the best prospect of success, and (3) the selection of an effective campaign issue. The party solved none of these problems. After the failure of the congressional caucus to establish itself in a position similar to that of the national committees today, the party was without national leadership except that which was supplied by Clay and other prominent National Republicans and by the *National Intelli-*

gencer. Within the several states the National Republicans of New York led in the organization of party machinery by reviving the scheme of correspondence committees of Revolutionary times. No effort was made to select from available candidates the one best qualified to lead the party. Clay's nomination was certain from the beginning, and therefore no adequate attention was given to John McLean whose candidacy at least had the possibility of dividing the Democratic vote. Accident determined the campaign issue when Biddle decided to apply for a renewal of the Bank's charter before the election. Without any other issue, Clay and his party made the cause of the Bank their own in the hope that Jackson's hostility would be an asset, an anticipation which of course was disappointed in the election of 1832.

Even before Jackson's reëlection discontent appeared in regard to Clay's leadership, and the thoroughness of his defeat discredited the party. Attention was centered in 1833, as a result of the nullification crisis, upon questions that had no relation to existing party divisions, and the situation was further confused when Clay favored a compromise of the tariff question in order to gain strength in the South. Aroused by Clay's temporizing policy, Webster endorsed Jackson's position and considered the possibility of a party in support of nationalist principles in which he

would share the leadership with Jackson. He was encouraged by Biddle during the summer of 1833 to negotiate with the administration in order to moderate Jackson's Bank policy. Coöperation between Webster and Jackson was made impossible, however, by the removal of the deposits, because there was no common ground between them upon this question. Clay thereupon procured the election of Webster as chairman of the Senate finance committee, a position in which he was compelled to take a positive stand against the President's policy in the removal.

A temporary depression in the spring of 1834, caused in part by the Bank's restriction of credit, reacted in favor of the opposition. It was attributed to the administration's war upon the Bank, and, in order to make the most of the favorable turn of events, the opposition assumed the name of Whig because of the associations of that name with earlier struggles in English and American history against an irresponsible executive. Confidence in an immediate success was aroused by a partial victory in the New York City election of April, 1834, but returning prosperity in the fall removed a tangible evidence of Democratic misrule, with the result that the Whigs lost what little ground they had gained. Moreover, it was soon apparent that sectional divisions within the party would make harmony impossible in the approaching election, and in the end three

candidates were placed in the field in the vain hope of forcing the election into the House of Representatives.

During the campaign of 1836 the friends of Clay and Webster declared that they would never sacrifice old and experienced leaders in favor of the practically unknown Harrison. But the election revealed Harrison's unexpected strength and introduced a new factor in the Whig party. At first an attempt was made to keep the party loyal to its old leaders through movements for the nomination of Webster or Clay. Webster negotiated for this purpose with the survivors of the Anti-Masonic party. In 1837 the party repeated its experiences of 1834, when the crisis of that year seemed to guarantee a certain Whig victory in the next election. The Whigs as a result won a series of victories in the fall of 1837, the most important being the election of a large majority in the New York Assembly. The parallel with the party's earlier experiences did not end here, however, for in the following year much of the ground that had been gained was lost. The party elected its candidate for governor of New York by a greatly reduced majority; aside from this, there was little reason for confidence. Instead of certain victory in 1840, therefore, Whigs had reason to fear another defeat, and as a result opinion turned against the nomination of either Webster or Clay. Webster failed in his efforts to secure

the Anti-Masonic nomination, and it was thought that Clay would have no chance. An opportunity was thus given to the friends of Harrison, who argued that his showing in 1836 made him the logical choice for the nomination. He was nominated by the Anti-Masons in 1838, and one of the most influential newspapers that previously supported Webster went over to him. It was argued that in order to win the election of 1840 the democratic element in the party must be given control. Harrison's nomination by the Harrisburg convention was made possible by the support of the western and frontier delegates as a result of a decision to copy the methods of the Democratic party. Men who had formerly declared their unalterable opposition to Harrison as unworthy of the party now rallied to his support.

Temporary harmony was won by the sacrifice of the leaders and principles of the National Republican party. That this sacrifice was necessary in order to achieve success was due to the character of the party as an alliance whose existence was threatened by dissension upon specific political and sectional issues. Except for the desire of office, which was common to all branches of the party, real union existed only in a conservative point of view among the majority of its members. The conservatism of the party was revealed by its attitude towards radical tendencies, towards the naturalization of aliens, towards the labor

movement, towards the disposal of the public lands, towards the qualifications of office-holders and towards the scope of the powers of the federal government. A frank expression of its conservative principles would have created a united party, but it would have been, according to William Schouler, "a respectable, but never a successful one."¹ The most active of Whig politicians and editors after 1836, men like Weed, Greeley, Ewing of Ohio, Thaddeus Stevens, and Richard Houghton of Boston, preferred success to a consistent position and, therefore, influenced the party to make its campaign in the form of an appeal to popular emotion and, for this purpose, to copy the methods of the Democratic party.

¹ Hudson, *Journalism in the United States*, pp. 392, 393.

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APPENDIX

The following maps showing the relative strength of parties in the presidential elections of 1832, 1836, and 1840 require explanation in regard to apparent omissions as well as to their significance. Although based upon county returns, county lines have not been shown within areas of the same political complexion. Important omissions appear in the map for the election of 1832 in the southern states as a result of the absence of data. In South Carolina the presidential electors were chosen then as well as in the two later elections by the state legislature. They were elected in Georgia on a state-wide ticket, but the returns indicate a majority for the Jackson electors of sixty to seventy-five percent. Although the vote was taken by counties in Alabama and Missouri, the relative unimportance of the vote in these States and their situation on the frontier explain in part the failure of contemporary statisticians to record their returns. The total vote in Alabama was said to be approximately twenty thousand, and of these the Jackson ticket was credited with a majority of sixty to seventy-five percent.¹ The counties in Missouri which reported numerical majorities with few exceptions gave a large Democratic vote.² In Vermont and Massachusetts the Anti-Masons ran their own lists of presidential electors, but their vote has been combined with that of the National Republicans as being in the main sympathetic with their political aims.

A comparison of the maps for 1832 and 1836 demonstrates, more clearly for the northern than for the southern states, the succession of the Whig from the National Republican party. Approval of Jackson's policies was

¹ Matthias, Benjamin, *The Politician's Register* (Philadelphia, 1835), pp. 76ff.

² *St. Louis Republican*, November 20, 1832.

too pronounced in the South for the development of effective National Republican strength in the election of 1832, except for restricted areas in Maryland, Kentucky, and Louisiana. Virginia and North Carolina approved his Bank policy, and the same consideration combined with native-son sentiment gave to the President the overwhelming support of all sections of Tennessee. His Indian policy, yielding as it did to the constant demand of the frontiersmen for more land, explains in large part the absence of material National Republican strength in Georgia and Alabama. In Louisiana, however, that party was able to make a more creditable showing in the "sugar bowl" where economic interest was an effective argument on behalf of the protective tariff. In general, therefore, and with this exception, the distinctive interests of the regions of the large plantations, which led them (as Professor Cole has shown) to the support of the Whig party in later elections, did not induce them to vote for Clay in the election of 1832.

In New England especially, the National Republican and the Whig parties were most successful in the more developed and prosperous areas. The co-incidence of majorities for these parties in western New York and the then far West with the location of settlements of New Englanders³ suggests a disposition on their part to carry their politics with them into the new country. Not only western New York, but the Western Reserve, the Marietta country on the Ohio river, and those parts of Indiana and Illinois which had been largely settled from this source voted heavily for the National Republican and Whig candidates. Local issues, however, were probably contributing causes. It is to be noted also in explanation of these maps that the Anti-Masons as a rule went into the Whig party, but in Massachusetts, as indicated by the increased Democratic vote in the election of 1836, there was a temporary drift into the enemy's camp. By 1840 this uncomfortable alliance seems to have been dissolved.

³ Matthews, Lois K., *The Expansion of New England* (Boston, 1919), pp. 168, 169.

